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THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUDES 4 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES AND *10 PAGES OF EDUCATION TIMES (*CITY AREAS ONLY)

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Russia unleashes nuclear-capable hypersonic Oreshnik missile in overnight attack on Kyiv, **killing 4 people** in one of the largest barrages in the more-than-four-year war. 600 strike drones and 90 missiles used, PAGE OPP

Officials in Democratic Republic of Congo update death toll from the Ebola outbreak to 204, hours after Red Cross said three volunteers had died there and Uganda confirmed three new cases, PAGE OPP

BJP national president **Nitin Nabin visits Karnataka for the first time after taking charge**, urges state leaders to strengthen party and **prepare for local body and legislative council polls**, P 4

Harry Kane scores a second-half hat-trick as Bayern Munich end their wait for DFB-Pokal (German Cup) with a 3-0 win over VfB Stuttgart in the final, P 14

Twisha's last rites done after 2nd postmortem

Twisha Sharma's mother (in blue) at her cremation in Bhopal Sunday. An AIIMS-Delhi team completed the 2nd postmortem earlier in the day as part of the probe into dowry harassment allegations in her death | P 9

High command to meet CM on May 26

Chief minister Siddaramaiah has been summoned to Delhi by the Congress high command on May 26, fuelling speculation over a leadership change or cabinet reshuffle. The CM completed 3 years in office last week. TNN

'Excess re-evaluation fee will be refunded'

Following glitches in its portal, CBSE has assured students any excess fee deducted for re-evaluation of Class XII answer sheets would be refunded automatically. Those who paid less will be asked to pay the balance, it said. P 7

24 killed in suicide attack on Pak train

At least 24 people are feared dead after an explosion ripped through a shuttle train in Pakistan's Balochistan province on Sunday, officials said. Banned BLA has claimed responsibility for the blast. Page opp

US, Iran 'close' to Hormuz deal, N-talks may go on

Good News Could Be Hours Away: Rubio

Chidanand Rajghatta & Agencies

Washington: "Iran never won a war, but never lost a negotiation," US President Trump said in January 2020 during his first term. It is a line that may be returning to haunt his second term administration.

After weeks of military escalation, Trump now appears scrambling toward a deal that falls significantly short of his maximalist goals. The immediate objective has narrowed to reopening the Strait of Hormuz and preventing a global energy meltdown. Trump late Saturday said the Strait "will be opened" under a new understanding with Tehran. However, slammed for "getting played" by Iran, Trump dialed down expectations Sunday morning, saying he has informed his representatives "not to rush into a deal".

In New Delhi, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said there may be "some good news" regarding Hormuz: "I do think there's some good news on that front, but not final news. But perhaps a little bit later today we'll have more to say."

Agencies quoting US officials reported that the two sides had agreed in principle to a deal that would wind down the war by reopening Hormuz with a commitment from Iran to dispose of its enriched uranium, details of which would be worked out subsequently.

▶No uranium pledge, Pg opp

▶MAN OPENS FIRE NEAR WH, SHOT DEAD, PG OPP

IRAN MAY BE ALLOWED TO SELL OIL

Likely Contours Of US-Iran Peace Deal, Per Officials

- Strait of Hormuz to **gradually reopen** in parallel with the **US ending its blockade** of Iran
- Further talks over **60 days** on how **Iran would give up its stock of enriched uranium.** Some would likely be diluted, rest transferred to 3rd country
- US to allow **Iran to sell its oil** through sanctions waivers. Iran may get **partial access to its frozen assets**
- **End to war between Israel and Hezbollah** in Lebanon, backed by Iran. (Israel insists it remains free to act against threats in Lebanon)

"Both sides must take their time and get it right. There can be no mistakes! Our relationship with Iran is becoming a much more professional and productive one

—TRUMP ON TRUTH SOCIAL

"Iran is ready to assure the world that we are not after a nuclear weapon

—MASOUD PEZESHKIAN, IRAN PRESIDENT

JS talks energy, raises visa issues with Rubio

New Delhi: India and the US focused on scaling up energy, defence and critical minerals cooperation, while seeking an early conclusion of the interim trade pact, as external affairs minister S Jaishankar and his US counterpart Marco Rubio sought to revitalise ties — after a year of strife — in their first bilateral in India, **reports Sachin Parashar**.

Jaishankar raised with Rubio the challenges faced by legitimate travelers because of visa-related issues, linking it with the health of business, technology and research cooperation. The minister said while the two sides were cooperating to deal with illegal and irregular mobility, India's expectation is that legal mobility would not be adversely impacted as a consequence.

Rubio said, notwithstanding the recent friction over India's continued purchase of Russian crude, the India-US strategic partnership was special because the two countries were aligned on all great challenges of the modern era.

▶Actions on trade, P 5

PTI

Rubio said India, US were 'aligned on all major global challenges'

'Holding centres' in West Bengal dists for illegal immigrants

Kolkata: BJP govt in Bengal has commissioned "holding centres" in all 23 districts for illegal Bangladeshi, Rohingya and other immigrants awaiting deportation, resuming a process stalled by the erstwhile Mamata Banerjee-led TMC govt for a year in defiance of MHA guidelines, **report Debashis Konar** and **Srishti Lakhotia**.

The order, issued by the state home department over the weekend to all district magistrates, came 72 hours after CM Suvendu Adhikari told reporters that the govt would adhere to the "detect, delete and deport" principle in all cases of illegal immigration.

▶ BJP wins Falta, TMC ends up 4th on Abhishek turf, P 8

▶ Continued on page 8

10 of family drown while collecting clams in backwaters in Bhatkal

1 Still Missing, 3 In Hosp; Search Operations On

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Karwar: Ten members of a family drowned after being swept away by strong currents while collecting clams off Alvekodi Beach in Bhatkal taluk of Uttara Kannada district on Sunday. One person is still missing while three have been hospitalised.

Fourteen members of the extended family from Shirali village had entered the backwaters around 10am to collect clams, a seasonal activity common in coastal and riverine areas during low tide.

"They had moved deeper into the water when the current suddenly intensified. A couple of women were dragged into the deeper end, following which several others waded further to rescue those struggling in the water. However, they too were caught in the strong current. Many of them did not know to swim," police said.

Sources added that locals had warned about the possibility of high tide later in the afternoon. The tragedy occurred around 2pm.

According to Bhatkal police, heavy rain late on Saturday night had increased the river's flow, while rough sea conditions and high waves are suspected to have caused a sudden rise in the water level. Authorities were yet to ascertain the exact sequence of events leading to the tragedy.

Rescue personnel, police teams and local residents were continuing search operations in the river.

"Many of those involved in the incident are familiar with clam collection and have done it before too," sources said. Mourning the tragedy, chief minister Siddaramaiah announced a compensation of Rs 5 lakh for the next of kin of each victim.

STRONG CURRENTS

- 13 members of a family enter backwaters in Bhatkal taluk **to gather clams**
- **Strong currents and rising water levels** drag two women into deeper waters
- Police suspect **heavy rain increased water flow** and triggered strong currents
- **PM Modi condoles deaths,** says ₹2 lakh will be given to victims' kin & ₹50,000 to injured
- CM Siddaramaiah announces **₹5L aid** for each victim's family

▶ PM announces relief, P 4

Your quick home cleaner may be an AI data collector

Supriya.Roy@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: A customer books a cleaner through an app. A worker arrives. But this time, there is a camera strapped to the worker's head.

The image has sparked widespread unease online. On-demand home services startup Pronto confirmed to **TOI** that a small subset of customers can opt into a programme where household jobs are recorded using visible, head-mounted cameras worn by workers.

The issue gained attention after online portal Entrackr reported that an investor memo linked Pronto's workflows to "physical AI" and robotics training data.

Pronto co-founder and CEO Anjali Sardana said the pilot covers 0.1% of users and is meant for customers who feel uneasy about allowing unfamiliar workers into their homes while away. "They worry about what's happening in their home during their booking. Something may be stolen or broken, or work may not be done properly," she explained.

SOMEONE'S WATCHING

A new investor at Pronto, Lachy Groom, is also a co-founder of Physical Intelligence, a US startup building foundation models for robotics.

▶Sale of datasets, P 11

Six B'luru cops suspended for security lapse during PM visit

Bengaluru: Six police personnel, including a police sub-inspector (PSI), an assistant sub-inspector (ASI), two head constables and two constables, have been suspended over a serious security lapse during PM Modi's May 10 visit to the Art of Living Foundation on Kanakapura Road. The disciplinary action comes two weeks after explosives were found near Kuppareddy Kere, around 2km from the AOL centre, along the PM's route.

Bengaluru South SP R Sinivas Gowda suspended the cops for dereliction of duty during VVIP security arrangements. The SP did not reveal the names of the suspended officials. A preliminary internal probe reportedly found that the suspended personnel had failed to inspect and monitor the area despite stringent VVIP security protocols. TNN

'FAILED TO INSPECT'

- Two weeks after explosives were found along PM Modi's AoL route, **six cops suspended for dereliction of duty**
- Internal probe reveals that suspended personnel **failed to inspect and monitor the area despite VVIP security protocols**
- According to **FSL report, gelatin sticks were three years old** and timer was defunct

▶ No breakthrough, P 3

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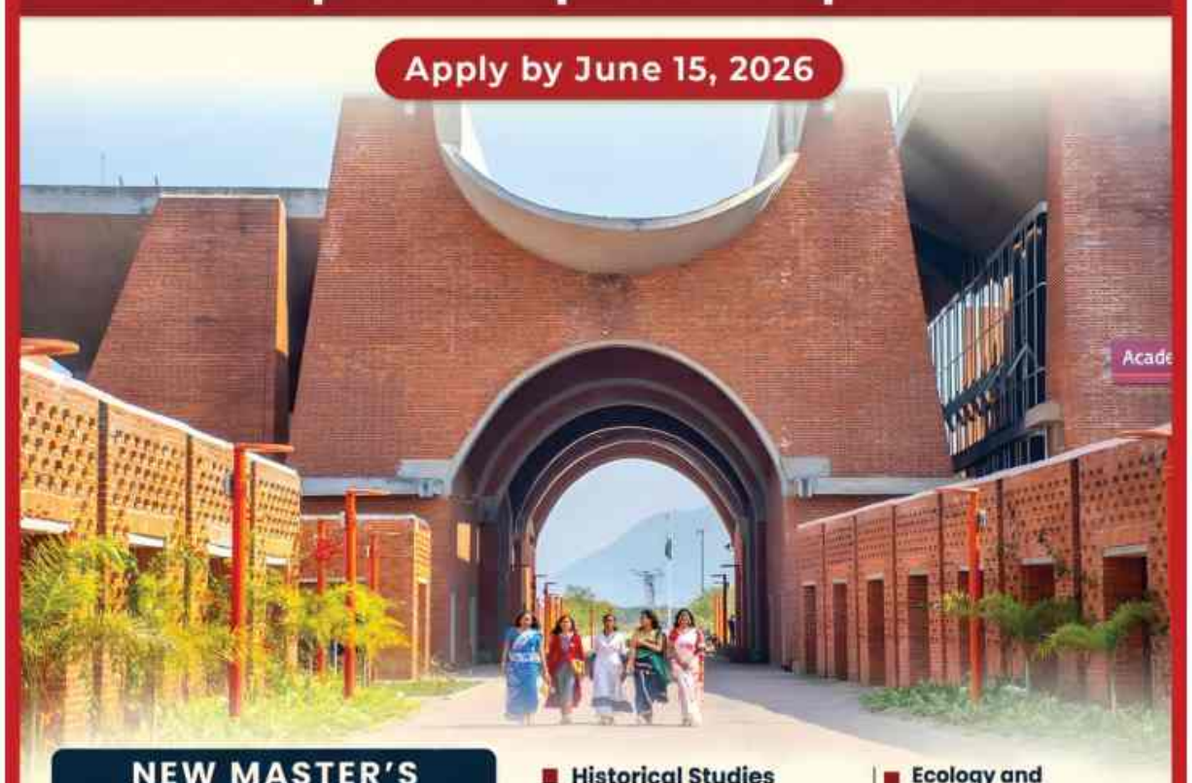

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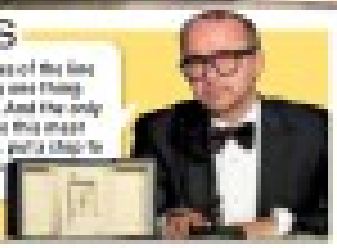
Bangalore Times

A decade after U Turn, Shraddha Srinath reflects on reinvention and regional cinema

'If you fear mistakes, you stop growing'

VOICES



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Education TIMES

THE PATH TO EXCELLENCE

Rising consumption across markets keeps retail hiring strong for MBA graduates

RAR: a small segment of placements, this sector is slowly emerging as a key recruiter, favouring graduates skilled in both traditional and digital operations

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Bengaluru | Hyderabad

B'luru witnesses 1 economic offence every 2.5 hrs: Report

IT City Among Top 5 Metros In This Category

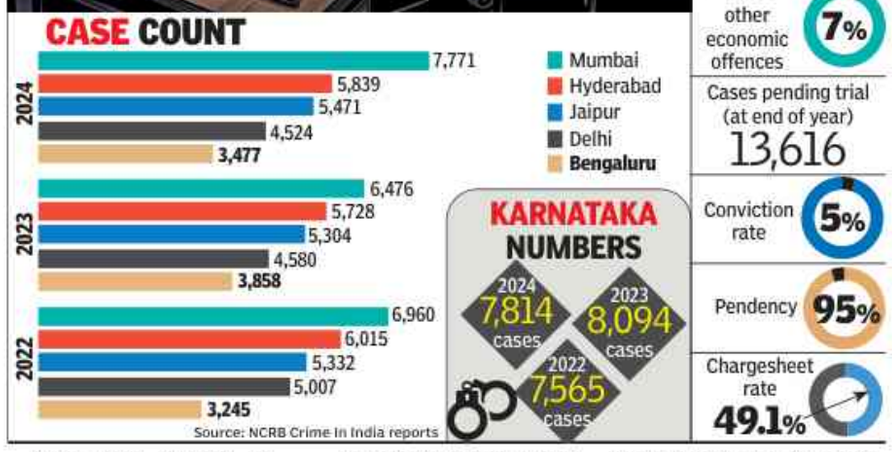
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: India's tech capital witnessed at least one economic offence — including forgery, cheating, fraud, financial scams, and related white-collar crimes — every 2.5 hours over the past three years (2022, 2023 and 2024) for which crime data is available.

NCRB ANALYSIS

In all, the city reported 10,580 such cases during these three years. The National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) Crime in India 2024 report shows Bengaluru recorded 3,477 economic offences that year alone, placing it among the top five metropolitan cities in the country for such crimes.

While the 2024 figure is slightly lower than the 2023 number (3,858), it is marginally higher than that of 2022 (3,245). However, the average of about 10 cases a day continued in the latest year, indicating that the fluctuation was within expected trends going by past years' data. During 2024, only Mumbai, Hyderabad, Jaipur, and Delhi reported higher totals. More revealing, however, is the nature of these offences. Of Bengaluru's 3,477 economic offences, 3,249 — more than 93% — fell under forgery, cheating, and fraud. The numbers suggest Bengaluru's urban crime profile is undergoing a structural shift: from physical theft and street crime to financial and digital deception.



The trend extends beyond Bengaluru. NCRB's statewise economic offences data shows Karnataka recorded 7,814 economic offences in 2024. Of these, 7,209 were categorised under forgery, cheating, and fraud.

The state's economic offence rate stood at 11.4 cases per lakh population. The data indicates that cheating and fraud now dominate Karnataka's economic-crime landscape, mirroring trends seen in Bengaluru. The city's economic offence rate, meanwhile, stood at 40.9 cases per lakh population. However, the crime rate calculation is based on the 2011 Census population data.

Police officers say the city's large digital economy, heavy online banking usage, and active investment culture have created fertile ground for fake investment platforms, cryptocurrency scams, impersonation fraud, trading-app cheating, and loan-app extortion.

Long wait for trial

The NCRB figures also show mounting pressure on the legal system. Bengaluru had 13,616 economic offence cases pending trial at the end of 2024. The conviction rate stood at just 5%, while pendency had crossed 95%.

Police disposal was similarly weak. Bengaluru's chargesheet rate in economic offences stood at 49.1%. Officials say financial crime networks increasingly operate across states using mule bank accounts, temporary sim cards, and encrypted communication channels, making money recovery and prosecution difficult.

NCRB data suggests Bengaluru's biggest crime challenge is no longer confined to burglary or physical violence. The city is increasingly confronting a new form of urban crime — one built around deception, digital access, and financial manipulation. And these do not include cybercrime cases, listed separately by NCRB.

Wall collapse: Firm booked for negligence

Bengaluru: Nearly a month after the deadly wall collapse on the premises of Bowring and Lady Curzon Medical College and Research Institute claimed seven lives, police have booked the contractor entrusted with demolition and debris-clearing work after a technical probe allegedly found negligence in handling construction waste.

The incident occurred on April 29 on the hospital premises, where old structures were being cleared to make way for a new hospital block. Following the accident, Chandru, the executive engineer, health and family welfare's engineering wing, constituted a technical committee to investigate the cause of the collapse.

According to officials, the committee found that Chennai-based ASR Traders had failed to scientifically dispose of debris generated during the demolition process. Investigators concluded that large quantities of demolished material were left dumped at the site instead of being properly removed, contributing to the collapse of the barrier and enclosure wall.

Authorities said the demolition and debris-clearing work had been assigned to ASR under a work order and agreement issued on July 1, 2017. The contractor was allegedly responsible for clearing the old buildings before construction of the proposed new hospital facility. TNN

Gang in Merc kidnaps, robs cab driver & pal over dispute

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NIGHTMARE RIDE FROM AIRPORT

- A cab driver and his friend were allegedly kidnapped, assaulted, and robbed by a gang in the early hours of May 22
- The attackers stopped the cab, forced the driver into their car at knifepoint, and robbed him of cash & phone. The gang also assaulted the driver's pal who was summoned
- Police said the clash was linked to a dispute involving a woman; several suspects have been detained

Bengaluru: A late-night airport pickup turned into a terrifying ordeal for a cab driver and his friend after they were allegedly kidnapped, assaulted, and robbed by a gang travelling in a Mercedes-Benz car on the city's outskirts. Police said the clash was over a woman.

According to a complaint filed by Mohammad Rafiq, 30, a resident of a hotel in Maruthinagar, Yelahanka, he is originally from Kerala and has been working in the city as a cab driver using a rented car for the last six months.

On the night of May 21, his friend Deepak informed him that he was arriving in Bengaluru and requested to be picked up from the airport around 11pm. He reached the airport and picked up Deepak around 1am.

While leaving the airport, Rafiq received a call from an unknown number asking for a ride. When he asked the caller to book the ride through the aggregator instead, the caller insisted on being picked up personally. He refused and disconnected the call, Rafiq claimed.

While approaching Begur around 1.15am, a white Mercedes-Benz car allegedly overtook and blocked the complainant's vehicle. Five or six men got down from the car, brandished knives and sticks, dragged Rafiq out and forced him into the Benz. The gang allegedly snatched his mobile phone and Rs 21,000 in cash before driving towards the city. On the way, they allegedly forced him to call his friends, telling him to claim he had met with an accident. As they stopped the car in a deserted place, Rafiq called his friend Jabir.

Acting on the call, Jabir arrived at the shared location, only to be threatened at knifepoint and with iron rods, and was forcibly taken by the gang to an empty site along with Rafiq.

The gang assaulted both victims. Rafiq managed to escape from them and reach his room by taking an autorickshaw. He took his friend Siddiq's phone and called police helpline 112 and informed them of the incident around 5am. He provided Jabir's number, requesting police to rescue him.

Sampigehalli police contacted Rafiq and informed him that they had found Jabir. Rafiq and Siddiq rushed to the station to find him injured in his ear. Jabir explained that the gang attacked him with a knife and robbed him of his mobile phone. Jabir was rushed to the Yelahanka govt hospital for treatment. Later, Rafiq filed a complaint with the Bagalur police, who registered a case under BNS Sections 137 (kidnap) and 310 (dacoity).

A senior officer said, "The attackers and the complainant are unknown to each other. We have found that the clash between them was over a woman. So, they assaulted and robbed Rafiq and Jabir. A few suspects have been detained and subjected to questioning."

Yoga, Zumba, Street Magic UNITE COMMUNITY

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JP Nagar woke up to another lively Sunday as residents stepped out in large numbers for Happy Streets by The Times of India, presented by Bhima Jewellers, turning the stretch near Adarsh Rhythm Apartment in Panduranganagar into a vibrant, traffic-free public space filled with music, movement, and laughter.

The morning began on a calming note with meditation by Falun Dafa, followed by yoga and pranayama sessions that encouraged participants to start the day mindfully. Heartfulness and wellness-focused activities added to the event's emphasis on healthy living. One of the major attractions was an emergency response awareness session by Alert NGO, where residents enthusiastically learnt how to perform CPR during emergencies.

Pics: Chethan Shivakumar

Youngsters gathered in large numbers for Zumba and energetic dance routines, while traditional art forms such as Bharatanatyam and Chenda also found enthusiastic audiences. Step Nation drew attention with three performances — a veena instrumental, a women's group dance, and a kids' group dance — while Swingers Dance Inc kept the crowd moving with lively fitness routines.

Cultural performances by Natyaankura–Centre of Creative Arts and Wellness, Nidam Academy, Retrovarna School of Arts, and Art Attic Academy added colour to the celebrations.

Music floated through the streets as many stopped to listen and hum along to old Kannada songs, with performances by Mic & Melody and From Mug to Mic keeping the atmosphere lively.

Street games turned into another crowd favourite, with residents indulging in rolling tyres, buguri, carrom, tug of war, and outdoor ludo. Watching these games unfold on the roads brought the motto of Happy Streets to life — reclaiming streets as joyful, people-friendly spaces where communities can come together, unwind, and simply enjoy a Sunday morning.

FUN & GAMES: JP Nagar residents participated in Happy Streets and enjoyed a lively Sunday filled with fitness, music, dance, games, and community activities on a traffic-free stretch

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NEET aspirant found dead in apartment

A young woman who appeared for NEET this year died by suicide at her home in an apartment near Court Circle, Kalaburagi, Sunday. The deceased has been identified as Bhagyashree Rajasekhar, 18, a student who secured 92% in the II PU exam.

The girl's father, Rajasekhar, said his daughter had high expectations from the exam. "But I don't know if there was any anxiety about the result. No death note was found. The reason for the suicide has not been disclosed. We will not complain to anyone," he cried. Station Bazar police have registered a case. TNN

(If you are having suicidal thoughts or are in need of emotional support, call suicide-prevention helplines — Arogya Vani: 104, Sahay Helpline: 080-25497777)

Four delivery execs booked in ₹4.2-lakh product swap fraud

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Bengaluru: What initially appeared to be routine order cancellations at a Flipkart delivery hub in north Bengaluru has unravelled into an alleged fraud involving four delivery executives accused of swapping expensive products with fake items and pocketing the originals worth over Rs 4.2 lakh.

The alleged fraud took place at Flipkart's delivery office in Varadaraju Layout in Amruthahally between Feb 1 and April 30. Based on a complaint filed by the company's enforcement officer MS Sardar, police have registered a case against four delivery boys — Nitin Murthy, Vishnu, Girish and Akash. According to the complaint, the accused exploited the delivery and return system by placing orders for costly products such as mobile phones, earbuds, branded clothes and shoes, either in their own names or through acquaintances. After collecting the parcels from the delivery office on the pretext of making deliveries, they allegedly removed the original products and replaced them with fake or low-value items.

The accused then allegedly resealed the packages and returned them to the office, claiming that the orders were cancelled because customers were unavailable at the delivery locations.

The fraud is said to have gone undetected for nearly three months until repeated cancellations involving high-value products raised suspicion among company officials. Police said the returned parcels from the Amruthahally hub were routinely sent to Flipkart's mother hub in Malur in Kolar district, where officials noticed fake products repeatedly turning up in returned consignments.

An internal inquiry later uncovered the alleged racket, revealing that nearly 40 products were fraudulently swapped. The company estimated its loss at Rs 4.2 lakh. Police said Vishnu, Murthy and Akash quit their jobs after the company initiated an internal probe, while Girish continued to work and admitted involvement in 4-5 fraudulent orders. All four were outsourced employees hired through a vendor.

One person has been detained while efforts are on to trace the delivery executives, police added.

60-day traffic diversion on Kamaraj Road

Bengaluru: Commuters travelling through the busy Shivajinagar area will face major traffic diversions for the next two months as authorities have imposed traffic restrictions on Kamaraj Road for the reconstruction of an old stone culvert near Nala Cross.

Traffic police said all types of vehicular movement will be prohibited for 60 days from May 24 to facilitate demolition of the old culvert and construction of a new RCC culvert by Greater Bengaluru Authority.

Traffic movement will be temporarily restricted from Vithoba Temple up to Nala Road. Vehicles travelling from KR Road, Cubbon Road junction towards Dickenson junction via Kamaraj Road will also not be allowed during the period.

Alternative routes

Motorists heading towards Pulakeshinagar and Banaswadi from Commercial Street side have been advised to take a right turn near Vithoba temple, proceed via Veerapillai street, turn left near Nagamma temple, and continue through St John's Road. Similarly, motorists from Cubbon Road side should proceed via Cubbon Road, Dickenson Road and St John's Road, while vehicles from Dispensary Road (Alice Junction) side have been advised to continue through Dickenson Road and St John's Road. TNN

30 yrs, 800 shows: Suryakiran to mark milestone in style

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pics: Special arrangement

SOARING HIGH: The team, popularly known as 'ambassadors of IAF,' will celebrate its 30th anniversary Tuesday at Air Force Station Bidar

Bengaluru: As Indian Air Force's (IAF) Suryakiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT) turns 30 this week, the elite aerobatics squadron is set to commemorate three decades of precision flying, daring manoeuvres, and crowd-thrilling air displays that have become one of the country's most recognisable aerial formations.

The team, popularly known as the "ambassadors of IAF," will celebrate its 30th anniversary on Tuesday at Air Force Station Bidar, where it was formed on May 27, 1996. Named "rays of the sun," the team began operations with the Kiran Mk-II aircraft and made its public debut later that year in Coimbatore in Sept 1996. Since then, the nine-aircraft formation team has become synonymous with close-formation aerobatics and low-level precision flying, drawing lakhs of spectators at air shows and ceremonial events across India and overseas.

Over the last three decades, the team has carried out more than 800 air displays in India and abroad, including performances in China, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates. Since 2015, the team has flown the Hawk Mk-132 aircraft in its signature red-and-white colour scheme.

Known for executing complex aerobatic manoeuvres with split-second timing and coordination, the team's displays often feature loops, barrel rolls, and inverted flying performed at high speed and low altitude.

The anniversary celebrations at Bidar will honour past and present members of the team and recognise their contribution in building Suryakiran into one of the world's leading aerobatic display teams, IAF said.

11 test pilots, 6 flight engineers graduate

Bengaluru: Eleven test pilots and six flight test engineers graduated from the 48th Flight Test Course of the Air Force Test Pilots School (AFTPS) after completing a 48-week multidisciplinary training programme, IAF said.

The graduating batch comprised 17 officers — 14 from IAF, one from the Indian Army, and two from the Navy. The officers will now join the aviation wing of the Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment (ASTE).

Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, who was an alumnus of the 17th Flight Test Course, attended the graduation ceremony as chief guest. He presented certificates to the graduating officers and awarded trophies to top performers. Sqn Ldr KK Singh got the Suranjan Das Trophy for the best all-round student test pilot, while Sqn Ldr Aditya Jamdagni won the Chief of the Air Staff Trophy for best test pilot in flight evaluation.

Among flight test engineers, Wg Cdr Abhinav Kumar was awarded the Maharaja Hanumanth Singh Sword for the best all-round student. Wg Cdr Pranav Sharma received the Dunlop Trophy for the best student flight test engineer in flight evaluation, while Sqn Ldr Paras Sharma won the Kapil Bhargava Trophy for excellence in ground subjects.

Air Chief Marshal Singh stressed the importance of "atmanirbharta" in building resilient indigenous defence capabilities and said test crew would play a crucial role in strengthening India's aerospace ecosystem. TNN

Driver, 21, repeatedly rapes schoolgoing teen, arrested

Bengaluru: A schoolgoing girl was allegedly raped multiple times by a 21-year-old Tempo Traveller driver, leaving her pregnant. The incident came to light three days ago after the girl complained of bleeding to her mother.

According to the complaint filed Saturday by the mother with Hulimavu police, her daughter, who is two months away from turning 16, studies at a private school on Bannerghatta Road.

The accused, identified as Akash, befriended the girl by following and meeting her near her school from Jan. He used to take the girl to the vehicle and spend time with her. In the first week of March, after school hours, the girl was on her way home when Akash took her to his vehicle, parked near a hotel, on the pretext of a chat. He then allegedly raped the girl.

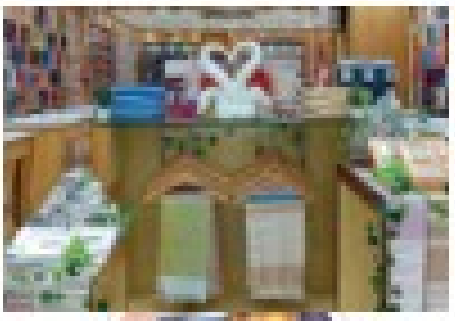
A few days later, he again took her to his vehicle and raped her. The girl's mother learnt about the assaults when the teenager complained of bleeding. The girl's mother took her for a medical examination and found she was pregnant. It was only then that the girl revealed the sexual abuse.

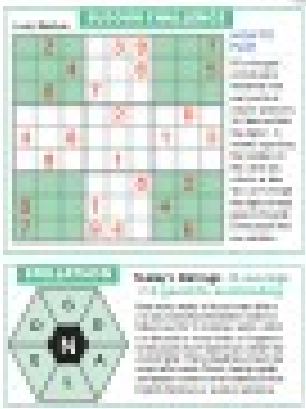
The panicked mother took the girl to a govt hospital for termination of pregnancy. The doctors immediately sent a medico-legal case report to Hulimavu police.

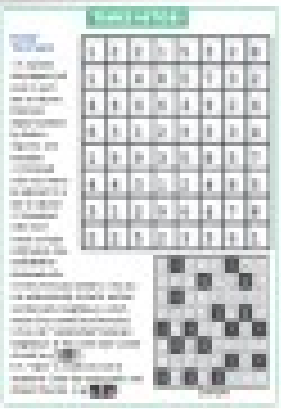
Police rushed to the hospital and took statements from the mother and the girl. A case was registered against Akash under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act, and he was arrested Sunday. The girl is still hospitalised. "Once she is discharged, we will complete formalities of medical examination," a senior police officer said. TNN

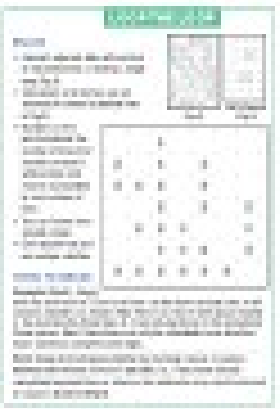
Self-care is how you take your power back – Lalah Delia

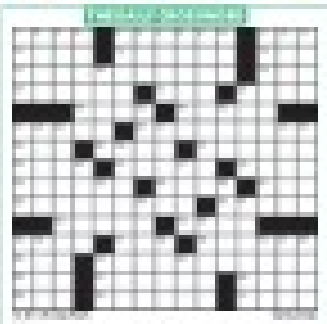
Bamboo towels take centre stage this World Towel Day

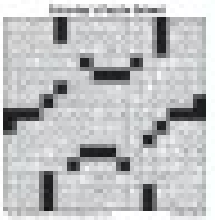


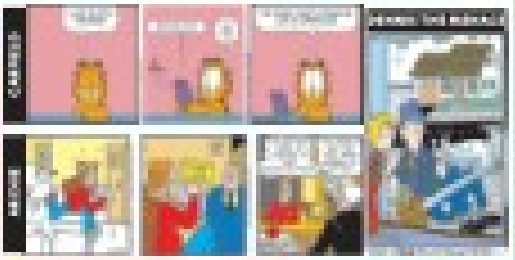


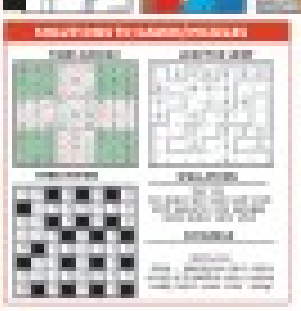


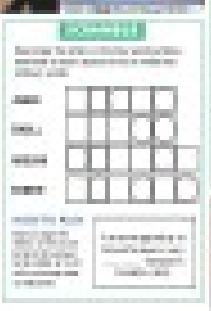












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AI innovation challenges redesign of prompt engineering syllabi

The lack of standardised benchmarks and assessment metrics dictates need to evolve teaching approaches across curriculum and training providers

Forestry inclusion in UGC NET will boost blue-green workforce

Booked house help, got court battle: Woman wins ₹32k from company

Vindhya.Pabolu
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Bengaluru: With a full-time job and an infant at home, a Bengaluru woman turned to an online domestic-help platform in search of dependable childcare support. But the staffer failed to report for duty despite payment, setting off a dispute that ended up in consumer court which ordered the platform to pay over Rs 32,000 in refund and compensation to the complainant.

The saga began when Suwetha Muthanna, 40, found herself in urgent need of domestic help. She turned to the internet for a solution and discovered BookMyBai — the consumer-facing brand of Mumbai-based Nano Job Consultants Private Limited — which offers online sourcing and placement of housemaids.

Suwetha registered on the platform, paying Rs 1,000 as a registration fee. She then paid an additional Rs 21,420 as directed by the company, with an agreement that a domestic help would commence service at her residence on March 30, 2024. However, the house help — identified as Sujatha — neither reported for duty nor appeared at her home on the agreed date.

Suwetha said when she sought a replacement, the company promised one but failed to act promptly. Left without help and unable to manage her professional commitments alongside childcare, she was forced to make alternative arrangements through friends. She then formally requested a cancellation of her subscription and sought a full refund of Rs 22,420, reaching out repeatedly through emails, WhatsApp and phone calls. The company, however, flatly refused, citing its internal policy of issuing refunds only in the form of vouchers.

Fed up, she sent the firm a legal notice on May 27, 2024, and also lodged a grievance with the National Consumer Helpline. As she was left with zero response, she filed a consumer complaint on Sept 4, alleging unfair trade practice, deficiency of service, negligence, mental agony, transport expenditure and litigation costs.

In its defence, BookMyBai argued that Sujatha was selected by Suwetha from multiple profiles shown to her, and the complainant insisted on a Saturday joining date even though the house-help was ready to join earlier in the week. The house help, they claimed, fell ill on the morning she was due to report. The company also maintained that it had arranged a replacement named Selvi, who could only join the following Monday, and that a two-day delay did not amount to deficiency of service. On the refund question, the company contended that it had already issued a voucher for the full amount paid and that this was in line with its stated terms and conditions, known to the complainant at the time of registration.

After hearing both sides, the commission noted that the company failed to produce any convincing evidence to support its claims. It held that retaining the money without providing the promised service amounted to a deficiency in service and an unfair trade practice.

The commission, comprising president Vijaykumar M Pawale and member Anuradha V, on May 18 ordered BookMyBai to refund Rs 22,420 with interest at 8% per annum from March 28, 2024, till realisation, along with Rs 10,000 in compensation for mental agony and litigation costs.

Deficiency in service
FIRM PAYS PRICE

- 40-year-old Suwetha Muthanna looks up for house help online urgently
- The mother comes across BookMyBai platform and registers on it, paying ₹1,000
- She pays an additional amount of ₹21,420 as directed by the company
- She books and agrees for commencing domestic help services at her residence on March 30, 2024
- The house help, identified as Sujatha, neither reports for duty nor appears at her home on the agreed date
- Suwetha seeks a replacement but company fails to act promptly
- She requests for cancellation of subscription and full refund of ₹21,420
- Company refuses refund, citing its internal policy of issuing refunds only in the form of vouchers
- Suwetha files a consumer complaint on Sept 4, 2024
- The company argues that the house help assigned fell sick on the day of reporting to work and they had arranged for a replacement, who could join only two days later
- The company also says it had issued a voucher for the full amount paid
- However, as it fails to submit evidence to support its claims, the commission observes that retaining the money without providing the promised service amounts to a deficiency in service and an unfair trade practice

1k litre of illegal liquor reaches city from Delhi via rail, seized

TOI

Officials found 74 cartons with 1,118 liquor bottles at the Yeshwantpur Railway Yard

Anush.S@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Railways unknowingly transported more than 1,000 litres of illegal liquor worth over Rs Rs 60 lakh to Bengaluru through its freight train. It was detected Thursday when Railway Protection Force (RPF) recovered the parcel from Yeshwantpur railway station.

It all started when Delhi police alerted RPF's Bengaluru division, suspecting illegal transport of liquor, following a case registered on May 18 at the national capital's Mehrauli police station. RPF personnel at Yeshwantpur were then called to the spot to attend a parcel special express which had arrived from Okhla in Delhi around 9:30pm.

Meanwhile, officials of the state excise department also arrived at the Yeswanthpur Railway Yard.

Officials found 74 cartons containing 1,118 liquor bottles of various brands. According to RPF, the total quantity of liquor seized was approximately 1,042 litres. The state excise department has taken the seized liquor into custody.

Parcel leased out by SWR to the logistics firm

AVG Logistics, the firm alleged to have transported the liquor, has been served a notice to appear before the excise department. "We are yet to ascertain the actual reason as the parcel van was leased out by South Western Railway (SWR) to the logistics firm. The investigation is ongoing," a senior RPF officer told **TOI**.

For context, liquor seizures from trains have been comparatively low in 2025-26. RPF data shows that in 2025-26, liquor worth Rs 2.3 lakh was seized by the RPF's Bengaluru division.

GBA: Pay 50% of property tax dues to file appeals

Citizens Say Drone Survey Not Accurate

Sanjay.Murty@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Thousands of property owners in Bengaluru have been receiving notices from the city corporations demanding payment of property tax dues, including arrears of penalty, cess, and interest, for five years starting 2020-21. As initial show-cause notices are now being converted into demand notices, citizens have been taken aback by the conditions imposed for filing appeals.

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) argues that 23,000 property owners underreported their built-up area while paying property tax under the self-assessment scheme. These properties were reassessed using drone surveys, which estimated a greater taxable area.

Citizens have been given the option to challenge the new assessment. However, they are now being asked to pay 50% of the tax dues for the corporations to entertain their appeals. BC Sheshadri, a senior citizen living in JP Nagar, said this might amount to Rs 50,000 or more for some residents. "My sister, who lives in JP Nagar 1st Phase, has received the demand notice even after replying to the show-cause notice which she received in Feb," he said, adding that the senior citizen lives on the family pension of her late husband. "We requested officials to arrange an inspection to determine the right area, but have not received any response so far. There was no physical assessment done to verify the drone survey either. The corporation is now demanding over Rs 1 lakh," he added.

Another senior citizen, living in JP Nagar II Phase, said he received the show-cause notice in Feb and sent a reply. "We made small changes to our house, but declared all those changes as and when we made them. We have one room on the second floor, and have placed sheets on the rest of the roof. The drone might have considered this as additional area," he said, adding no officials from the corporation visited his house for verification. "I have not yet received a response to my appeal," he said. The resident, however, has not received a demand notice yet.

'OTS for defaulters, penalty for taxpayers'

Some residents pointed out that the erstwhile BBMP had offered a one-time settlement scheme for defaulters, but is now penalising honest taxpayers and accusing them of tax evasion. "The corporation is sending a demand notice after a few months, seeking double the difference amount along with a 24% interest component. Meanwhile, it has accepted property tax based on self-assessment for 2026-27 as well, without revising the tax amount according to their assessment. This is a way of fooling the public," Vidyaranyapura resident Ravi Krishnamurthy, said.

NO CLARITY ON REFUND OF 50% DEPOSIT

GBA special commissioner (revenue) Munish Moudgil said a majority of those who have been served notices are actually liable to pay. "Citizens have an option to prove that their assessment is right. Those issued show-cause notices had 3-4 months to appeal. Between 7,000 and 8,000 people appealed and we have left them out," he said.

"The owner can pay 50% of the dues and challenge the notice. If the owner is able to convince the revenue officials, the notice will be withdrawn. The money paid will be refunded or adjusted against any liability. The option of refunding or adjusting the amount collected rests with the corporations," he added.

GBA argues that 23,000 property owners underreported their built-up area while paying property tax under the self-assessment scheme. These properties were reassessed using drone surveys which estimated a greater taxable area

Investigators yet to make breakthrough

▶ Continued from page 1

The explosives, including two gelatin sticks, matchsticks, camphor, batteries, wires, a real-time clock and an LCD display, were packed in a carton box. The box was found near the compound wall of a private property, around 25 feet away from the main road.

A police constable found the suspicious box one-and-a-half hours before Modi's convoy passed through the route. Police are yet to make a breakthrough in the case. They had initially maintained that only two gelatin sticks and a matchbox were found in the carton box. But after a couple of days, when the NIA collected details, the other components in the box came to light.

The forensic science laboratory report stated that there was no threat from the explosives found in the carton box. The FSL mentioned that the gelatin sticks were around three years old, the timer was defunct, and there was no detonator in the box.

A deputy superintendent of police is investigating the case registered under the Explosives Act

K'mangala footpaths get clean makeover

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

TOI

COMMUNITY DRIVE

Bengaluru: Frustrated by littering and the absence of public dustbins, residents of Koramangala launched a community-led cleanliness initiative that has transformed parts of the neighbourhood.

The drive, involving Siddharth Dialani and other local residents, saw installation of multiple dustbins across four streets, putting up awareness banners and clearing debris from footpaths.

Posting on X, Dialani said around Rs 15,000 was spent on procuring dustbins, lock-chains and awareness material. Other local residents also took responsibility for replacing garbage bags and emptying the bins every alternate day. Separate bins were installed for dog waste, while collected garbage is handed over to the civic authority's trucks.

The initiative also saw the authorities deploy trucks and earthmovers to clear heavy construction debris such as pipes, bricks and cement blocks from footpaths. The residents additionally contributed funds to paint footpath walls, with plans to add plants in the area and expand the drive to more streets, Dialani said in the post.

Caleb Friesen, a Canadian who previously lived in Bengaluru and frequently posted about civic issues in the city, supported the initiative. "If city govts do not do their job, citizens must pick up the slack," Friesen wrote.

"If citizens are forced to do the jobs of govt servants — who are paid salaries from our tax money — what exactly are those officials being appointed and paid for?" another user wrote on X. A comment on the post said while citizen participation was welcome, govts should not become dependent on residents stepping in to fill civic gaps. "But having said that, no one should knowingly litter and should carry their trash home," the user said.

Wild elephant herd charges at foresters

Foresters in Kodagu faced a tense situation Saturday when a herd of wild elephants charged at them during an operation to drive the animals out of coffee estates in Guhya village, Madikeri.

At the start of the operation, the elephants turned aggressive and attacked the team, forcing the staff to retreat temporarily.

The drive was launched following repeated complaints from villagers about elephants straying into coffee plantations in Guhya and nearby Nellihudikeri villages. During the exercise, the herd split into smaller groups and moved across plantations, making the task difficult. While some elephants were pushed back, several remained inside the estates around Guhya village and along the riverbanks of Nellihudikeri.

Officials said the herd comprised over 21 elephants, including five calves. TNN

Textile workers' union slams govt for exclusion from wage revision

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pic for representation

The union alleges the move has unfairly affected garment workers, particularly women

Bengaluru: The Garment and Textile Workers' Union (GATWU) has criticised the state govt for excluding 19 labour-intensive industries, including the garment sector, from the revised minimum wage notification issued Friday. The union said the move has caused injustice to lakhs of workers, especially women, whose wages are among lowest wages in the state.

In a statement, the union alleged that the decision was taken arbitrarily and pointed out that the govt did not specify any timeline for revising the wages in these sectors. It stated that most workers employed in the excluded industries are women and belong to economically weaker sections.

The govt revised minimum wages at uniform rates for several scheduled industries and stated in its final notification that the revision was aimed at addressing differences in wage rates and ensuring equal minimum pay for all categories of workers.

However, GATWU argued that the govt's claim of ensuring equality was contradicted by the exclusion of 19 industries from the revision. According to the statement, wages for these industries will instead be revised separately through the committee method under the Wage Code, 2019, as the sectors involve piecework patterns and are labour-intensive.

The union said women workers in these industries are already paid significantly lower wages compared with those in several other sectors and argued that the govt should have prioritised these industries during the revision process. The union accused the govt of following a gender-discriminatory approach in fixing minimum wages despite publicly promoting women's empowerment initiatives.

The union stated that minimum wage revisions in the industry have remained unfair for nearly 40 years. It said around 4 lakh garment workers in Karnataka currently earn a minimum wage of approximately Rs 13,000 per month, nearly 30% lower than wages paid in other industries. While welcoming the govt's move to increase minimum wages by 60% for workers in other sectors, GATWU urged the govt to immediately extend the revised structure to the remaining excluded sectors.

Citizens fume as concrete chokes Sankey Tank

Sanjay.Murty@timesofindia.com

TOI

FALLING WATER LEVELS: Residents say sewage inflow and unchecked concretisation are threatening the survival of the historic lake

Bengaluru: Falling water levels, increased concretisation, and the inflow of untreated sewage into Sankey Tank are threatening the survival of the historic waterbody, residents alleged Sunday during a public awareness campaign organised under the 'Save Sankey' initiative.

Residents of Sadashivanagar, Malleswaram and nearby areas gathered near the lake to highlight environmental concerns and demand accountability from local MLA CN Ashwath Narayan.

Shilpa Jatti, member of the residents' group Voice of Sadashivanagar, said the locals are out to create awareness and are requesting the govt to take immediate action to stop the flow of sewage into the tank.

"Years ago, we feared people would drown because the tank was full of water. Today, seeing the water level fall so drastically has made us anxious about Sankey Tank's survival," said Suma BS, a resident of Subramanyanagar.

MA Sreenivasan, who lives right next to the tank, said it has undergone successive redevelopments since 2003-04. "When development works were taken up, the lake water level was raised, and this led to inundation around our house," he said.

Congress member Anoop Iyengar, who contested the 2023 assembly elections from Malleswaram, raised the issue of multiple unwanted structures being built around the tank.

"When there is already a library here, there is another one coming up on the Malleswaram side. Extra washrooms are being built, and the greenery around the tank is being reduced to mere ornamental plants. Labourers engaged in work elsewhere are housed on Sankey premises," he further said.

"A few years ago, the tank was home to migratory birds, which are now nowhere to be seen. Their nests were removed and the remaining greenery was reduced. The 'Save Sankey' initiative is not about any individuals or parties, but for the survival of Sankey Tank," he said.

Inlets blocked

Manu Jagadish, another resident of Sadashivanagar, said the lake's 11 inlets have been blocked, as a result of which rainwater from Sadashivanagar is not flowing into it. "Instead of rainwater, untreated sewage is being let in. This has been the case for around four years now. Birdwatchers and nature lovers have stopped coming to Sankey Tank," he said.

Residents also pointed out the old concrete base of the kalyani, which was shifted to one corner of the premises, was left on the tank bed along with steel bars and other material. They raised awareness among walkers and also performed a skit as part of the 'Save Sankey' initiative.

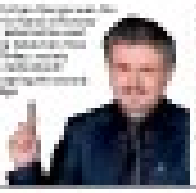
UP TO DATE

WHAT'S #TRENDING AND WHY

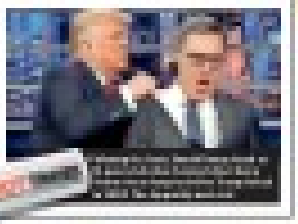
Footballer? Ram Charan's slip-up on Ronaldo goes viral, leaves apology

Cricketer Jemimah Rodrigues leaves Instagram in tears

Mangio's polarisation drama Pjanić wins Palme d'Or



Stephen Colbert's finale draws 4.74 million before Donald Trump's AI jab goes viral



Watch owned by Andy Warhol set for auction

Market's watch slowdown

I struggled mentally too, but learnt to trust myself again, says Harmanpreet

"If you don't feel pressure, you are probably too relaxed"

"Standing off the field matters just as much"

"The calmness of a captain has an impact on the whole team"

"Winning in front of my family is special"

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SIR: Sceptical of legal challenge, Cong asks MLAs to prevent voter deletions

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Chief minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar Sunday directed party MPs, MLAs and MLCs to launch a large-scale awareness campaign on the forthcoming Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, warning that failure to complete the process could result in deletion of voters' names from the rolls.

The directions were issued at a meeting titled 'Congress Nade – Mata Rakshane Kade' (Congress move towards protection of votes), at a private hotel near Devanahalli. The meeting was attended by Randeep Singh Surjewala, Congress national general secretary in charge of Karnataka.

Sources say party functionaries discussed concerns surrounding the SIR exercise and brass observed that a legal challenge against the process may not produce substantial results, citing the Supreme Court's response to issues raised by former West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee. Instead, they emphasised the need to ensure proper implementation of the exercise and prevent procedural lapses.

STAYING READY: Randeep Singh Surjewala, CM Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar urged legislators to hold awareness programmes on SIR

"The state is expected to launch its own awareness drive to help voters submit applications with proper documents and signatures during the SIR process," Shivakumar said.

They said nearly 76 lakh voters have already been mapped under SIR. Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar instructed legislators to activate booth-level agents (BLAs) and booth-level officers (BLOs) and establish helplines to assist voters in completing the process.

"Only those who submit applications issued by the Election Commission along with necessary documents will retain their voting rights," Shivakumar said. "Those who fail to submit forms may lose their voting rights. Through BLAs, we need to ensure their rights are protected."

They also directed ministers, incumbent and former legislators, and ticket aspirants to intensify awareness efforts in their constituencies, especially ahead of Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) civic polls in Aug.

They stressed the importance of assisting voters whose names had already been mapped under the SIR process to ensure they submit necessary documents to retain their names on the rolls. MLAs were also asked to educate voters about the significance of participating in the revision exercise.

Sources said legislators who had secured narrow victories against BJP candidates in previous elections were specifically cautioned to closely monitor the process in their constituencies.

During the meeting, Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar also instructed Bengaluru MLAs to prepare for GBA elections, reiterating that the polls would have to be conducted before the end of Aug.

SIDDARAMAIAH CALLED TO DELHI

Congress' high command has reportedly summoned chief minister Siddaramaiah to Delhi for a meeting on Tuesday. Until late Sunday, deputy CM DK Shivakumar was not invited. Speculation is rife that the summons is related to either a CM switch or a cabinet revamp. Shivakumar refused to react to the development, saying he was unaware of it.

Many skip meeting

Party brass was reportedly displeased with the absence of several legislators from the meeting. Sources say more than 50 MLAs and five ministers failed to turn up.

Apex court rule on OCs puts spoke in smart meter rollout

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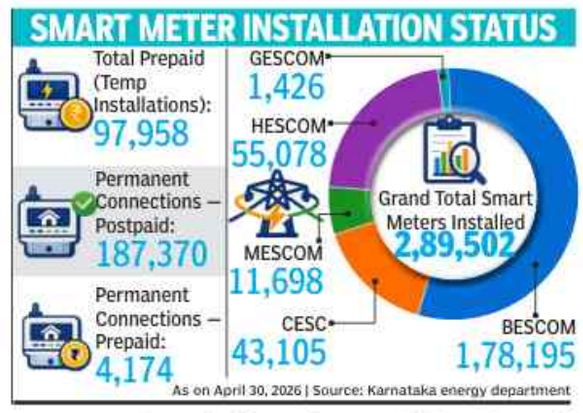
SMART METER INSTALLATION STATUS
Total Prepaid (Temp Installations): 97,958
Permanent Connections – Postpaid: 187,370
Permanent Connections – Prepaid: 4,174
GESCOM 1,426
HESCOM 55,078
MESCOM 11,698
CESC 43,105
BESCOM 1,78,195
Grand Total Smart Meters Installed 2,89,502
As on April 30, 2026 | Source: Karnataka energy department

Bengaluru: The govt's move to install smart meters for new electricity connections across the state has snowballed into a major administrative challenge, caught in the fallout of confusion surrounding the Supreme Court's order on mandatory occupancy certificates (OC).

Smart meters are expected to reduce transmission losses, improve billing efficiency and enable real-time monitoring of electricity consumption. But the SCs decision, aimed at enforcing building compliance norms, inadvertently slowed a push towards modernising the power sector.

Launched nearly a year ago, the programme was initially introduced for all new and temporary electricity connections in Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) and Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Company (Cescom) jurisdictions, before being expanded to the other three Escoms.

But official data accessed by TOI shows only 2.9 lakh smart meters were installed as of April 2026 — far below initial projections.

The court mandated that electricity connections for new buildings could only be issued upon submission of valid OCs. Energy department officials said uncertainty over implementation of the order led to confusion among consumers, builders and even field-level Escom engineers.

Escoms reacted by putting lakhs of applications for new power connections on hold — especially in urban areas where several apartment complexes and residential layouts were awaiting OC approvals. Karnataka State Licensed Electrical Contractors Association (KSLECA) estimates some 15-16 lakh applications were stalled.

"Yes, lakhs of households were initially affected but the state cabinet's decision to intervene and relax implementation procedures provided major relief. Over the past six months we've installed nearly three lakh smart meters," an official said. The official said the initiative would gain momentum in the coming weeks since Escoms have now resumed processing new applications aggressively, especially urban centres.

Of the five Escoms, Bescom recorded the highest number of installations with 1.8 lakh smart meters, followed by Hescom (Hubballi - 55,078) and Cesc (Mysuru - 43,105). Mescom (Mangaluru) installed 11,698 meters, while Gescom (Kalaburagi) recorded the lowest at 1,426.

However, most of these installations — 97,958 — were temporary prepaid connections, while 1.9 lakh permanent postpaid smart meters were installed. Permanent prepaid smart meter adoption remained low at just 4,174 connections statewide.

"Most prepaid connections were for under-construction buildings," an official said. "These will eventually be converted to smart meters after completion of work and issuance of OCs by municipalities and corporations."

C Ramesh, president, KSLECA, said: "Had the govt intervened earlier, the rollout would have been faster. The govt only eased rules for properties on 30x40 plots. Of the 15-16 lakh properties awaiting smart meters, 30-40% would have benefited, but many others are still awaiting new connections, and the state govt must act proactively to resolve the confusion. It is losing revenue in the meantime."

Prepare for local body polls, Nabin directs Karnataka BJP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: BJP national president Nitin Nabin, during his maiden visit to the state after taking charge, urged party functionaries not to take BJP's presence at the helm in 22 states for granted and called for stronger grassroots engagement ahead of upcoming elections.

FAMILIAR BEAT: On his first trip to the state as BJP national president, Nitin Nabin visited Kadu Malleshwara Temple in Bengaluru on Sunday

At a meeting with party legislators, MPs and district presidents, Nabin urged members to focus on strengthening party organisation and preparing for local body and legislative council elections besides assembly bypolls and the 2028 state polls. There was no talks on Rajya Sabha polls.

Nabin is said to have stressed the importance of staying connected with citizens and party workers at the grassroots to strengthen public support and organisational reach. BJP core committee members, including MLCs CT Ravi and CN Ashwath Narayan said Nabin instructed the state unit to immediately begin preparations for the 2028 polls and warned against taking any election lightly. CN Manjunath, MP, said the immediate focus is assembly bypolls in Hiriyur and Dharwad constituencies.

He said strengthening the party structure at the mandal level was central to the two-hour discussions. "We have 300 mandals and training is ongoing on social media use, memes and artificial intelligence at that level," said a BJP functionary. S Suresh Kumar, MLA, described the meeting as "business-like" and said Nabin sought accountability from party office-bearers.

Sources say Nabin also emphasised the need to effectively use social media amid growing online anti-incumbency campaigns.

Addressing reporters alongside state BJP president BY Vijayendra, Nabin criticised the Congress govt, accusing it of neglecting development and welfare initiatives. "Congress has used the state as an ATM," he said.

Sources say Nabin also discussed the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and referred to lessons from West Bengal. Y Bharat Shetty, MLA, said Nabin instructed members to closely monitor public sentiment on social media, especially after "the anti-incumbency factor surfaced with the Cockroach Janata Party online".

WHO SAID WE'LL CHANGE STATE PREZ: JOSHI

While Nitin Nabin was expected to discuss the turmoil surrounding the party's state president post, there appeared no formal discussion on the issue. Balachrandra Jarkiholi, MLA, said it would be prudent for incumbent BY Vijayendra to continue since state elections are only two years away. "During the meeting, those (dissenters) who had to receive a message got it indirectly," he said.

Asked about the issue, Union minister Pralhad Joshi said it was the media which is indulging in speculation. "Vijayendra is president. Who said there will be change?" Joshi shot back.

When pointed out that several of those who are opposed to Vijayendra had stayed away, CT Ravi, MLC, said: "Nabin told us that no one is bigger than the party and the party is not bigger than the nation." TNN

Liquor prices: Big shock for small shots

Pearl.DSouza@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The latest price revision of liquor in the state, driven by changes in excise duties linked to alcohol content, has significantly increased prices of budget brands — especially those sold in 90ml and 180ml packs including Tetra Pak ones — while several upper mid-range and premium labels have either seen marginal hikes or become cheaper.

An analysis of revised retail prices across slabs shows the steepest impact has fallen on budget whisky, rum and brandy segments largely consumed by price-sensitive customers.

In the lowest slab, 90ml packs that earlier retailed at around Rs 40, now cost between Rs 45 and Rs 50. Prices of 180ml bottles and Tetra Pak ones have also risen sharply, while the maximum retail price of a 750ml bottle in the category has shot up from Rs 395 to Rs 420.

Although the increase in smaller packs appears marginal in absolute terms, the effective rise per ml is substantially higher. Industry estimates show the 90ml category has recorded the steepest increase among all slabs, followed by 180ml packs. "Alcohol in this slab is usually not sold much within Bengaluru city limits. Urban consumers generally opt for the next slab upwards," said Vikram Jagdish, owner of the 80-year-old Dewars Wine Stores in Bengaluru.

The second slab has also seen steep increases, especially in the 750ml category, where prices have gone up by as much as Rs 90 for some brands.

Smaller quantity packs and Tetra Pak ones in this segment too, have become noticeably more expensive.

In contrast, from slab five onwards, the trend reverses. Several upper mid-range and premium brands have either retained prices or reduced rates. One whisky brand in slab five cut the price of its 90ml bottle from Rs 95 to Rs 90, while its 180ml pack became cheaper from Rs 185 to Rs 175.

In slab six, which includes premium mass-market brands, several labels maintained existing prices. A Bengaluru-based vodka brand retained prices for both 90ml and 180ml packs, while some whisky and brandy brands reduced prices of 90ml bottles from Rs 105 to Rs 90.

BJP to take call on Gowda nomination

Union steel and heavy industries minister **HD Kumaraswamy** Sunday said neither he nor JD(S), his party, have asked for a ticket to renominate former PM HD Deve Gowda to the Rajya Sabha.

"BJP, our ally, has 63 seats, and we have left it to their discretion on who to nominate," said Kumaraswamy, also state president of JD(S). "BJP Delhi brass will take a final call on how much they need Deve Gowda in the capital." Gowda's six-year term in the Upper House ends on June 25. Polls to fill 24 seats in 10 states will be held on June 18.

Convict walked free in 2018 with fake SC order, case booked now

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Another irregularity in Central Prison, Parappana Agrahara, has come to light in which a life convict was released using a forged Supreme Court order, in 2018.

According to the SP of Central Prisons Karna B Kshatri, convict Shankar A, bearing prisoner number 12503, had been sentenced to life imprisonment under Sections 364A and 120B of the IPC in a kidnapping conspiracy case by Fast Track Court-1. The court had also imposed fines of Rs 5,000 under each section, with additional imprisonment in default of payment.

A purported order of the SC dated Nov 2, 2018, along with related communication, was produced before prison authorities, following which the convict was released from jail on Nov 13, 2018, after payment of a Rs 10,000 fine.

However, years later, prison authorities found that the SC order used for securing the release was fake. Officials suspect that forged documents were created and submitted to facilitate the illegal release of the convict.

Following complaints received by the DGP (prisons and correctional services) Alok Kumar, an internal inquiry was initiated. Records and documents were handed over to the DIG (prisons), South Zone, for investigation.

The officials contacted the assistant registrar of the Supreme Court to verify the authenticity of the release order. The verification reportedly revealed that the order dated Nov 3, 2018, was fabricated.

Based on the findings, prison authorities filed a case at Parappana Agrahara police station against Shankar A and others suspected of helping him forge documents and secure illegal release from prison.

Police are also investigating the network involved in creating the fake court documents and helping the convict evade imprisonment. A senior officer said details of the prison officials who served during that period will be collected and they will be issued notices to appear for questioning.

"If they are found involved in the fraud, action will be taken against them too," the officer said. Officials have no clue about Shankar's present whereabouts.

Modi promises ₹2 lakh relief

▶ Continued from page 1

In a post on 'X', Siddaramaiah said he was deeply distressed to learn about the "extremely tragic and painful incident" and prayed for the departed souls.

The deceased are Malati Jattappa Naik (38), Lakshmi Madeva Naik (40), Lakshmi Shivarama Naik (40), Lakshmi Annappa Naik (50), Umesh Manjunath Naik (25), Lakshmi Madheva Naik (40), Jyoti Nagappa Naik (38), and Mastamma Manjunath Naik (45), Manjamma Gotsa Naik, 50, and Nagaratna Parameshwar Naik, 40. Madev Jattappa Naik, 52, is missing.

President Droupadi Murmu said the incident was "very distressing".

In a post on X, PM Narendra Modi said he was deeply pained to hear about the mishap in Karwar district. "My condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. May the injured recover at the earliest," he said. An ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each deceased. The injured would be given Rs 50,000, he said.

Land case: Ballari corporator's husband booked

Ballari: An alleged land fraud involving encroachment on govt property and the sale of plots using forged documents has come to light in Ballari, with police booking 13 people, including Shivaraj, the husband of Congress corporator Umadevi.

The FIR was registered at APMC Yard police station following a complaint by district administration and revenue officials after an encroachment clearance drive at Survey No. 125 in Pathrabudihal village on May 22.

According to the complaint, 7.8 acres of govt 'stream land' was encroached upon and illegally converted into plots, which were sold to the public using fake possession and sale documents. Officials said buyers were misled into believing the land belonged to the accused. "Several people told officials that the accused collected lakhs of rupees" the complaint said. TNN

Mandya murder twist: Inquiry reveals victim was not target

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mandya: A shocking twist has emerged in the murder of 29-year-old Sunil from Chunchaganahalli, who was brutally hacked to death at K Honnalagere on May 19.

With the arrest of three accused, police investigations revealed that Sunil was not the intended target but became an unintended victim of a plot allegedly aimed at a relative of the accused.

According to police, the sequence of events began inside a bar where Sunil picked an argument with Nishanth and his associates from Ajjahalli. The heated exchange escalated into a quarrel, forcing the bar staff to intervene and ask Nishanth's group to leave the premises. After stepping out, Nishanth and his friends reportedly parked their car a short distance away and continued drinking inside the vehicle.

Nishanth borrowed Rs 5 lakh from Ashok. Angered by demands for repayment, Nishanth and his pals invited Ashok to the bar. Before Ashok could arrive, fight broke out with Sunil who was hacked to death

A short while later, Sunil allegedly went to the same spot and again picked a fight with the group, police said. In the ensuing clash, Nishanth's associates allegedly attacked Sunil with lethal weapons kept inside the car, leading to his death.

Fight over repayment

During the investigation, police found that the weapons were not originally brought to target Sunil. Nishanth had borrowed Rs 5 lakh from his relative Ashok and was under pressure to repay the amount. Angered by repeated demands for repayment, Nishanth and his associates allegedly invited Ashok to the bar for drinks and carried the weapons with the intention of threatening him.

However, before Ashok could arrive, the confrontation with Sunil broke out. Enraged and under the influence of alcohol, the accused allegedly turned their fury on Sunil and murdered him on the spot. Investigators said Sunil ultimately became the victim of a plan that was originally intended for Ashok.

Maddur police, who launched a search operation after the murder, have arrested Nishanth, Ravi and Karthik. Further investigation is under way.

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The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

MR. G. RATHNAKAR
12.03.1938 - 24.05.2026
We regret to inform you of the passing of our beloved RATHNAKAR on 24.05.2026.
Viewing at his residence on 25.05.2026 b/w 8:30am & 9:30am.
Funeral service at CSI Wesley English Church 11 Promenade road, Burial at Hosur road Cemetery Gate-1.
Lovingly remembered by: Mano, Rabi & Della, Deepu, Vinay & Samantha Brothers; Raj and Sheila, Rajan & Elsie Family and friends

REMEMBRANCE
SHARING MEMORIES

29th Death Anniversary
Y. RAMA KRISHNA
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We miss you every moment of our lives. Your memories are immortal and missed beyond measures.
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IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER AND ALWAYS

GEETHA T. PILLAI
Vijay T. Pillai and Family

Pishe Narayan Rao
(P N Rao)
25.05.1903 - 18.01.1991
Like a fine thread, his legacy runs through time - subtle, strong, and forever refined.
Management, Staff and Family Members
P N RAO FINE SUITS SINCE 1923

Actors today aren't just actors; they're also brands: Shraddha Srinath

Shraddha's net-ahi-k in parade over the years

Trump family welcomes a new member, Bettina

FILM REVIEWS

NOW IN CINEMAS

A romantic drama that turns into an exciting crime thriller

Review in short

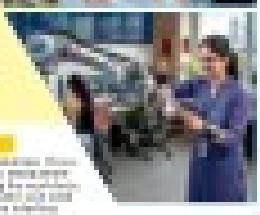
A pandemic story that works better in concept than execution

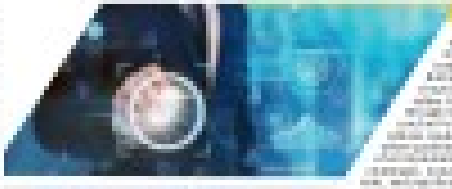
Review in short

Akon's polyamory rules spark buzz

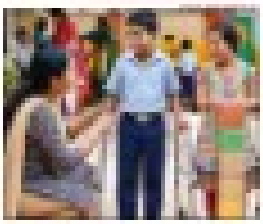
Using AI with a human touch

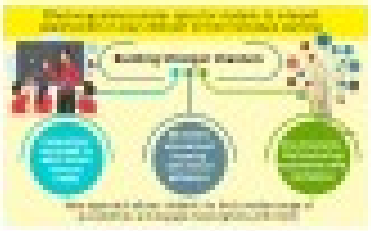
Leaders need to communicate effectively in a tech-driven environment by demonstrating understanding, and engaging ethically with employees, writes Sumeet Kakkar





Career Cards open new doors for CwSN





Smart classrooms need smarter questioning

K'taka urges centre to mandate groundwater conservation in textbooks

Relevance of living labs on campus

TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | MONDAY, MAY 25, 2026

MURALEEDHARAN SLAMS CONG'S 'DOUBLE STANDARDS' OVER KELKAR'S APPOINTMENT AS KERALA CM'S SECRETARY

FEARED LADAKH WOULD BECOME ANOTHER MANIPUR, BUT RECENT MHA TALKS A POSITIVE SHIFT: SONAM WANGCHUK

HACK OF THE DAY — **ASK GEMINI QUESTIONS ABOUT A YOUTUBE VIDEO**

WHAT IT SOLVES: Understand a long tutorial, review, or lecture without watching and rewatching every minute

WHAT TO DO: Use Gemini to ask about YouTube videos, playlists and channels and get quick answers from content

STEPS:

1. **Open** the Gemini app or Gemini website
2. **Paste** YouTube link or ask Gemini to find video on a topic
3. **Ask** for a summary, key steps, pros, cons, or study notes
4. **Follow up** with specific questions about any part
5. **Verify** important claims by opening the video or checking other sources

CAREFUL: Great for learning, but AI summaries are not final proof. Use them to navigate video faster

SCAN FOR MORE

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

22yr-old tries to settle land feud with bullets, kills 3 of Pjb family

A 22-year-old man, in an alleged bid to settle a land feud with bullets and blood, shot dead his nonagenarian grandmother, elder brother, and uncle. His aunt was critically injured in the attack. CCTV cameras captured the horrific triple murder that occurred in Bichpari village, around 30km from Ambala, on Saturday evening. The accused, Abhishek, is on the run. Police identified the deceased as Abhishek's brother Sandeep Kumar (40), uncle Mahinder Singh (50), and grandmother Isro Devi. Mahinder's wife Sunita (45) was battling for life in hospital. On a complaint from Sandeep's wife Neha, police registered an FIR against Abhishek and his parents. Neha alleged that her father-in-law Satbir, and brother-in-law Abhishek, had sold sand from their and Satbir's brother's portion of land and divided the money among themselves. "No share was given to Mahinder uncle. My husband demanded a share of the sand money, and a scuffle broke out on Saturday when Abhishek suddenly started shooting with a pistol," Neha claimed. TNN

STATISTICS A slice of life in numbers

Reality cheque: 140-yr-old law, only 18 cases filed

The Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881* — a British-era law governing cheques and other money-transfer documents — continues to be used. Although only 18 cases were filed in 2024, mostly involving cheque bounce and non-payment of dues, all were in two states

No. of cases under the Negotiable Instruments Act

*Governs financial instruments like promissory notes, bills of exchange, and cheques in India. Source: NCRB, 2024

India can always count on me: Trump

Dials Gor At US Event, Says Big Fan Of Modi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India and the US had never been closer, US President Donald Trump told Sergio Gor in the middle of the US Independence Day celebrations, 'Freedom 250', attended by secretary of state Marco Rubio and external affairs minister S Jaishankar, and told the ambassador to tell PM Narendra Modi he was "a big fan".

Gor's direct access to the US president, as an inner circle loyalist, was evident as he managed to get Trump on a call in the middle of the event that saw AR Rahman performing his chartbusters.

"India can count on me 100%. If they ever need help, they know where to call. They call right here. We're doing well. We're setting records. We have a record economy, a record stock market and anything India wants to get. I am a big fan of Prime Minister Modi," said Trump in his call with Gor.

When Gor asked Trump if he had any message for Rubio, Trump said, "He is the greatest. He's going down as the greatest secretary of state in the history of the US... Say hello to PM Modi and let him know I'm a big fan."

Rubio said later that while the US had many great ambassadors, he wasn't aware of anyone who was a better event planner.

Gor said the interim trade deal between the nations would be signed in a few weeks. "Since I arrived in New Delhi just five months ago, we have announced an interim trade deal that, hopefully, in the next few weeks, will get signed. India has been invited, accepted and joined Pax Silica, and commercial diplomacy is at a record high," he said.

REUTERS

US envoy Gor speaks to Trump on the phone at the 'Freedom 250' event

Stupid people everywhere: Rubio on racism

There are stupid people both in India and the US who make dumb remarks, said Marco Rubio to a question about racism in the US against Indians. "I'm sure there are people that have made comments online and other places, because every country in the world has stupid people. I'm sure there are stupid people here. There are stupid people in the US that make dumb comments all the time," he said. "I don't know what else to tell you other than the US is a very welcoming country. Our nation has been enriched by people who come to our country." TNN

Iran world's leading sponsor of terrorism, says Rubio in Delhi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: US secretary of state **Marco Rubio**, in the presence of minister of external affairs S Jaishankar, launched a scathing attack on Iran, calling it "the world's leading sponsor of terrorism".

"Look what they are doing now. They are holding hostage civilian vessels, including ships that have now been stuck in the Persian Gulf," said Rubio, adding that the Donald Trump administration would never allow Iran to have nuclear weapons.

"This is an Iran that has organised the assassinations and attempted assassinations of people all over the world, including civilians and dissidents and people they don't agree with. There is no nation on earth that sponsors more terrorism than Iran. And they have spent millions and millions of dollars sponsoring terrorism," he added.

The Iranian embassy here rejected Rubio's remarks, saying what was "disrupting and threatening maritime security and the passage of vessels" in Strait of Hormuz were the "military, provocative, and adventurist actions of the US and the Zionist regime in the region".

"These two regimes are the principal drivers behind the escalation of global security and energy crises and seek to advance their political and military objectives through the creation of instability and insecurity," it said.

The embassy said Iran, "as a committed member of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, has consistently declared that its nuclear programme is entirely peaceful and remains under the supervision of International Atomic Energy Agency".

PM has handed sovereign India's foreign policy to US, says Cong

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: With secretary of state Marco Rubio announcing that India has pledged to purchase goods worth $500 billion from the US over next five years, Congress on Sunday alleged PM Narendra Modi has handed over sovereign India's foreign policy to the US, even as it asked Modi if "capitulation" to the US on

Congress spokesman Jairam Ramesh said India's yearly imports are $52.9 billion, and India will have to double its annual imports from the US

imports is linked to "the relief provided to the Modani empire by US President Donald Trump". The US last week dismissed the criminal fraud charges against Adani in the "solar energy scam".

In a statement referring to Rubio's announcement, Congress spokesman Jairam Ramesh said India's yearly imports are $52.9 billion, and India will have to double its annual imports from the US.

Ramesh said countries like Malaysia have annulled their trade agreements with the US after US Supreme Court declared Trump's tariffs as illegal.

"Indo-US trade deal saw Modi govt unilaterally make enormous concessions that threaten our farmers and industries. The logic of this deal has now collapsed after US Supreme Court's verdict striking down tariffs. Why has govt not had the courage to renounce this anti-people, dangerous trade deal like Malaysia and other countries have?" he asked He said Modi has asked Indians to save foreign exchange but agreed to record imports from the US, arguing surge in imports will further weaken the Rupee.

Rubio: Actions on trade, visa global, not targeted at India

▸ Continued from page 1

It's a strategic alliance between two countries that has global influence and the ability to influence global events. And that distinguishes it from other relationships," said US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in his media statement.

The US Secretary of State denied that there was any loss of momentum in the relationship because of differences over any issue, saying US actions on trade and visa were carried out with a global perspective and were not targeted at India alone.

He expressed hope that a US trade delegation would arrive soon in India for more talks. As they discussed the West Asia situation and other global issues, minister Jaishankar reiterated India's support for dialogue and diplomacy, safe and unimpeded maritime commerce, scrupulous respect for international law and trusted partnerships and resilient supply chains to derisk the global economy.

With focus also on cooperation in critical minerals, an area dominated by China, Jaishankar said India is against any weaponisation of market shares and resources. Jaishankar also mentioned India's zero-tolerance approach towards terrorism in his media statement, thanking the US for strong counterterrorism cooperation. Asked about Pakistan's mediation in the US-Iran peace talks, the minister only said that it's for the parties to work out.

Without taking Pakistan's name, Rubio said that US ties with any country will not come at the expense of its "strategic alliance" with India and that Washington works at a tactical level with many countries.

Jaishankar defended India's energy ties with the US, saying this is an era of derisking and energy "more than anything else requires de-risking".

"And for us, the US is a very significant and reliable source of energy, as indeed are some other countries. So the way we will deal with the current situation in Hormuz is to diversify our energy sources, because that is at the heart of our energy security," said Jaishankar. According to Jaishankar, both sides are driven by their respective national interests in the relationship. There will be many areas where our national interests are in harmony... there could be some where they are not in which case we have to manage those situations. For our energy security, it's important we have multiple sources - large, dependable and cheap".

On the visa issues that Indians are faced with, Rubio said that the US modernisation of its migration system is not targeted at India and that all countries act in their national interest, including on their immigration policy.

Rubio said while there will be some bumps during this period of transition, the US may end up with a system that in some ways would prove to be even more beneficial than for those from India seeking to enter the US to work and innovate.

Mamata to move court over poll loss, seeks EVM forensic test

Dwaipayan.Ghosh
@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: Former Bengal CM and Trinamool Congress chief **Mamata Banerjee** alleged Sunday she was "forcefully defeated" in south Kolkata's Bhowanipore, a seat she had represented since 2011, and said she would move court seeking a forensic test of EVMs used in April's assembly polls.

The former chief minister lost Bhowanipore to former aide Suvendu Adhikari — now CM of Bengal's first BJP govt. She alleged poll manipulation and accused EC officials of facilitating rigging.

"How did you win in Bhowanipore? I will speak about this in court. If you have courage, get a forensic report. We want EVMs checked. We know this rigging was orchestrated from EC's central office," she said in a Facebook Live address. She alleged TMC polling agents were barred from counting centres. "People from BJP's IT cell were sitting in data centre. People in CRPF uniforms were actually BJP members," she said.

She accused Adhikari of unleashing "state-sponsored terrorism" against TMC workers. "Person currently in office should not be in that position. I endured everything in silence for 20 days," she said, alleging more than 2,500 TMC workers had been arrested and 12 had "either been murdered or forced to die by suicide".

Kakoli quits as TMC's Barasat dist president

Kolkata: Trinamool's Barasat MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar resigned from the post of the party's Barasat organisational district president Sunday.

In a letter addressed to state party president Subrata Bakshi, she stated that she was stepping down, taking moral responsibility for TMC's defeat in Barasat. While doing so, she indirectly attacked political consultancy agency I-PAC. TNN

How conwoman used Shariah laws to dupe investors of ₹6k cr

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate has come across a unique case where Muslims became prime targets of a scam for their fear of Shariah, which prohibits earning interest on investments. The perpetrators targeted unsuspecting public with a promise of giving profits of up to 36% per annum on their investment — and within a few years collected over Rs 6,000 crore.

The entire scam was masterminded by a woman, Nowhera Shaik, based out of Hyderabad. She finally ran out of luck and was arrested last week from a hotel in Gurugram in Delhi-NCR, absconding for more than a month after the Supreme Court cancelled her bail and asked her to surrender. The con woman even tricked the courts and enforcement agencies several times with her fake claims. Once she even tried to mislead the apex court saying she had surrendered before the Hyderabad police but they had refused to take her into custody. More than

The entire scam was masterminded by a woman, Nowhera Shaik, based out of Hyderabad. She even tricked the courts and enforcement agencies several times with her fake claims

Rs 400 crore of assets beneficially owned and controlled by her have been confiscated and are in the process of being restituted to the victims of the scam. "Nowhera Shaik, her family members and other associates lured lakhs of people into investing in their ponzi schemes, offering profits of around 3% per month (36% per annum)," a senior ED official said. Such huge profits were given to initial investors, but 1.7 lakh others lost their deposits. A probe was ordered by SC and subsequently all assets attached by ED were ordered to be confiscated and allowed to be disposed of for their restitution.

Again, the mastermind and her associates filed multiple affidavits and claims, further delaying the sale of the assets and their disposal, not cooperating with the proceedings of the courts. One of her associates, claiming to be 'Kalyan Banerjee', impersonated as PMO official to derail the SC order of the sale of assets and their restitution. Banerjee was arrested in January. The searches and actions were ordered against Nowhera by the SC after the scam was brought to its notice. The agency in 2024 during a search on her residence recovered 12 vehicles, including luxury cars like a BMW, Mercedes Benz, multiple Toyota Fortuners, one Mahindra Scorpio, and cash worth Rs 92 lakh.

"Kalyan Banerjee was found during investigation to be acting in close association with prime accused Nowhera Shaik and attempting to derail the auction of confirmed attached properties by impersonating himself as having links with PMO," he said.

Major who shot JCO to face court martial first

Soumitra.Bose
@timesofindia.com

Nagpur: An Army court of inquiry is set to evaluate evidence against Major Manan Tiwari before initiating court martial for allegedly gunning down a junior commissioned officer during firing practice on May 15 at Pulgaon's Central Ammunition Depot (CAD) in Maharashtra's Wardha.

The move marks a pivotal point in a legal wrangle between Army authorities and Wardha police over Tiwari's custody and investigations into the shooting of the JCO, Subedar Major Om Bahadur Khand. Tiwari had fired from an INSAS rifle while Khand was picking empty cartridges at CAD's firing range, blowing up the 56-year-old's skull.

The shooting at Pulgaon's CAD, Asia's largest ammunition depot, raised questions about safety protocols and discipline during firing exercises

Major Manan Tiwari is currently in Army custody. The police may have to wait and complete legal formalities, but without custody. Sources said the cops could file a chargesheet once the court martial was completed. "We have sent seized materials to a forensic laboratory. We will ascertain our role regarding the probe after the Army's procedure is over," said a senior police officer.

If convicted, Tiwari will face punishment from the Army, while the police will have to incorporate the verdict in its chargesheet and terminate the probe from its end after seeking court permission, officials said.

The cops had filed an FIR at Pulgaon police station, based on statements of an eyewitness, Lance Naik Bir Singh Dhami. Another officer cited Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) provisions to say the Army first holds court martials and completes proceedings in such cases.

The shooting at Pulgaon's CAD, Asia's largest ammunition depot, raised questions about safety protocols and discipline during firing exercises.

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Teacher, Topper, Coaching King — And A NEET Leak Trail

• A former university topper built one of Maharashtra's biggest coaching centres • A retired chemistry teacher became an NTA subject expert • A mock test allegedly had 42 of 45 NEET questions • Now, Latur's famed 'Tuition Area' is under CBI glare

Mohammed Akhef, Swati Shinde Gole, Ardhra Nair, Gitesh Shelke & Hemali Chhapia | TNN

The video appeared days before the NEET-UG leak was confirmed. A man is seen asking two girl students if questions from his coaching centre's mock tests had figured in the exam. The students, breaking into smiles, confirm that most of their biology, chemistry and physics questions had indeed appeared in the mock tests.

The man is Shivraj Motegaonkar, and the girls were among those who did their NEET preparation at Renukai Career Centre (RCC), the popular coaching centre he founded some 25 years back. Motegaonkar is now under arrest in the exam leak case and the video — shot as a publicity stunt — is perhaps the strongest indication of his wrongdoing, CBI sources say. But Motegaonkar was not the first suspect with a Latur link to be picked up as the probe widened. That was his close associate P V Kulkarni, a retired chemistry teacher and National Testing Agency (NTA) subject expert, who was arrested from Pune.

The alleged role of the duo in the leak has not only brought Latur's famed 'Tuition Area' under the glare of investigators and the media, it has also raised questions over whether aggressive practices in Maharashtra's coaching hub — known for its 'Latur Pattern' of training — led to one of India's biggest exam scandals in recent times.

'Bouncers For Teachers'

Every day before sunrise, thousands of students arrive on buses, bicycles and mopeds at Latur's 'Tuition Area', deep inside a neighbourhood once earmarked for setting up factories. The factories never got built, but what came to flourish instead was the business of exam coaching on an industrial scale. Coaching centres here run 365 days a year, even on Sundays, from 6am to midnight. Diwali vacations are used for "extra coaching".

Last week, this routine was interrupted when CBI and police turned up to investigate this year's NEET-UG question paper leak. At the eye of the storm is Motegaonkar and RCC. Known to tens of thousands of students as just "M Sir", it's hard to miss his face staring down from posters on buses and autorickshaws across the state whenever exam season approaches.

The tutors Motegaonkar hired — they included top MBBS graduates and former IITians — had bouncers for round-the-clock protection so as to insulate them from poaching attempts by rival coaching centres. Some of these IITian tutors were paid Rs 1.5 crore a year, depending on their "conversion rate", says an RCC insider.

"The coaching centre monitored how many students were cracking IIT or NEET under a particular teacher. That became the teacher's 'market value'. It's no wonder they had bouncers," says a former faculty member.

'Formidable Team'

Kulkarni, by contrast, was described by colleagues as a quiet individual. "He was very old-school in his ways, not wildly popular among students, but not unpopular either. He had a spotless record. He retired from here in 2023 after 28 years of service and our association ended," says Sidheshwar Bellale, principal of Dayanand Science College, Latur.

It's at this college that investigators believe Kulkarni and Motegaonkar's paths first crossed, back in the 1990s. Kulkarni was a chemistry teacher and Motegaonkar a BSc student who tutored students in the same subject to support himself financially. His reputation as a tutor grew and it helped that he was a university topper and gold medallist in MSc chemistry from Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University in Nanded. Motegaonkar later cleared SET, NET and JRF exams and completed a PhD.

"At some point, Kulkarni the chemistry teacher and Motegaonkar the chemistry tutor found themselves in the same local circles. They would later strike up a working relationship and stay in touch," says a senior police officer. "They became a formidable team in the highly competitive 'coaching class' business. Kulkarni was the academic with deep knowledge of how colleges prepared question papers, while Motegaonkar developed sharp business instincts and a network of coaching centres in Maharashtra. It certainly was a good team-up."

The team, investigators say, struck gold in 2019 when Kulkarni began working with the National Testing Authority (NTA) as a translator.

Ahead of this year's NEET-UG, says another senior police official, "Kulkarni was given three sets of question papers, each with 45 questions, to translate into Marathi."

"He allegedly shared 132 of the 135 questions with Motegaonkar. One of the three sets of question papers was selected by NTA and we suspect that is why a mock test by RCC, conducted 24 hours before the May 3 NEET exam, had 42 matching questions out of the 45, along with the answer keys."

Kulkarni was arrested on May 15; Motegaonkar two days later. In one of his last social media posts, M Sir is seen urging students not to panic and treat the repeat NEET exam as a "second chance". Motegaonkar's brother, Shrikrishna, dismisses the allegations. "My brother is innocent. He hasn't done anything wrong."

Estimates suggest that of the nearly 50,000 students who land up every year in Latur's coaching institutes, almost half go to centres in 'Tuition Area', where Motegaonkar's RCC got the lion's share of hopefuls

Motegaonkar was among the loudest voices in the state who demanded action after NTA conducted NEET retests at specific centres in 2024, following allegations of irregularities. In a PIL he filed that year, he said those trying to "corrupt the education system" deserved "*mrityudand*".

'Latur Pattern'

Latur is often compared to Rajasthan's Kota, but the model here, some say, is kinder to students. That's largely due to the fact that it draws most of its students from districts of Maharashtra, thereby avoiding Kota's feeling of "isolation". The "Latur Pattern" began in the 1980s and was originally designed, through vigorous drills, to help students clear their board exams. Later, in the 2000s, it expanded to cover entrance exams.

It's a model that's had mixed success. Last year, of the 8,138 Maharashtra students who secured MBBS seats in the first round, 1,203 were from Latur district. In 2022, Latur had 70 students who scored 100% marks in SSC exams; Pune had five, Mumbai one.

As word spread about its ability to churn out high-scorers, business boomed in 'Tuition Area'. Commercial space in the locality hit Rs 25,000 per sqft last year, comparable to some parts of south Delhi. The biggest player here is Motegaonkar's RCC. Estimates suggest that of the nearly 50,000 students who land up every year in Latur's coaching institutes, almost half go to centres in 'Tuition Area', where RCC got the lion's share of hopefuls.

Motegaonkar had even split his students into batches, based on how much they could pay. Standard coaching fee was an annual Rs 80,000 for a student. Then there was a 'platinum batch' for wealthier families willing to pay as much as Rs 5 lakh a year. There was a 'Doctor's Batch' for children of medical professionals and, finally, the 'Arjuna Batch', reserved for the "exceptionally talented".

PV Kulkarni being taken to a Delhi court. Shivraj Motegaonkar (right), owner of RCC coaching centre, whose head office — 'Nalanda Centre' (left) — is situated in 'Tuition Area', Latur's coaching hub

'Not A Tuition Model'

But educators say there's a key difference between Kota's and Latur's training methods. The 'Latur Pattern' was designed to ensure learning and teaching was only through colleges — unlike in Rajasthan's hub, which relied solely on coaching institutes.

"Put simply, this is not a tuition model," says professor Deelip Deshmukh, coordinator of the common entrance test (CET) cell at Rajarshi Shahu Mahavidyalaya, Latur. Steps were taken to prevent Latur from turning into Kota. Colleges decided that their teachers and professors would not tutor at coaching centres and even informal affiliations with coaching centre operators were actively discouraged.

So, some in 'Tuition Area' were surprised by how Motegaonkar and Kulkarni struck up a working relationship. "Kulkarni was considered a master of exam patterns," says a retired Latur teacher. "He was near retirement when he was brought into the NEET ecosystem and Motegaonkar did not waste an opportunity to get close to him."

Others say the allegations Kulkarni and Motegaonkar face threaten to destroy a precious education model that has helped thousands of students escape one of the most drought-prone regions of the country.

"I feel pain. Nearly 50 years of effort has been tainted by these allegations. I hope they are not true," says 90-year-old professor Anirudha Jadhav, who is among the pioneers of the 'Latur Pattern'.

Satish Pawar, director of a coaching centre, says the racket is the second "big quake" to hit Latur, referring to the 6.4 magnitude tremor that struck the region in 1993, killing 10,000 people. "It may seem like a rather strong comparison, but in all my 30 years here, I've not had more than 50 questions from mock tests match the actual NEET or JEE exams," he says.

Others have asked for reforms. "Demand for coaching classes exists because syllabuses of competitive exams follow NCERT, while the state boards differ significantly from it. So, unless there is uniformity in curricula, evaluation and examination systems, this dependency on coaching classes, I fear, may continue," says D D Kumbhar, vice-principal of Pune's Fergusson College.

"One shouldn't be surprised that police are grilling parents as well in this case," adds a science teacher from Karnataka. "Students are not the ones paying lakhs of rupees for a question paper. In fact, I have had parents come up to me and ask, 'what's really wrong if the same set of questions is found in a mock test and the actual exam paper?' They say it could be coincidence, too. So I'm not sure who needs an education now."

RAJ TO LATUR: JOINING THE DOTS

Arrests have continued in the wide-ranging probe into the NEET-UG leak; here are some of the turning points

A sealed RCC coaching centre in Latur

MAY 1–2, 2026 'GUESS PAPER' SURFACES IN RAJ
Question sets labelled "guess papers" circulate on WhatsApp and Telegram groups before the May 3 NEET-UG. Questions from these sets, suspected to have originated in Rajasthan, match those in the entrance exam.

MAY 6-8 EMAIL TO NTA POINTS TO LEAK
A teacher reportedly mails screenshots of leaked questions to NTA, which notifies central agencies.

MAY 11-12 BREAKTHROUGH IN RAJ, CBI STEPS IN
Police bust a network allegedly involved in leaking "guess papers" from a rented flat in Sikar; 13 suspects — from Sikar, Jhunjhunu and Dehradun — detained. A career counsellor in Sikar is also arrested for allegedly leaking biology questions. Centre orders CBI inquiry, cancels exam.

MAY 13 FIR REGISTERED, ARRESTS BEGIN
CBI begins probe with searches across several states. Among the arrested are Shubham Khairnar, who's picked up from Nashik for allegedly identifying students from affluent families and arranging supply of leaked papers to them. Mangilal, Vikas and Dinesh Bival of Jaipur also held, along with Yash Yadav of Gurgaon.

MAY 14 MAHA LINK EMERGES
Police detain Dhananjay Lokhande, an ayurvedic doctor in Ahilyanagar, and Manisha Waghmare, a beauty parlour operator in Pune, who was accused of acting as a go-between in the leak racket.

MAY 15 RETD TEACHER HELD IN PUNE
CBI uncovers a logistics network based in Bihar linked with the leak. In Pune, PV Kulkarni, an NTA subject expert and retired chemistry professor who used to teach in a Latur college, is arrested for allegedly supplying question papers.

MAY 16 ANOTHER NTA INSIDER ARRESTED
Manisha Mandhare, senior botany lecturer in Pune, and NTA subject expert, arrested. Manisha Havaldar, a Pune school headmistress and another NTA subject expert, held on May 22.

MAY 17 COACHING CLASS NETWORK EXPOSED
Shivraj Motegaonkar, founder of RCC coaching institute in Latur, arrested for involvement in the racket.

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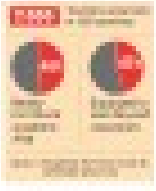

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Govt ropes in IIT, PSB experts to fix glitches in CBSE portal

Board Extends Last Date For Seeking Answer Sheets For Recheck To May 25

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Officials have been asked to explain the reasons behind the technical failures, preparedness measures adopted before opening the re-evaluation window, and accountability of agencies and vendors managing the digital infrastructure

New Delhi: Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan has sought a detailed report from Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) after widespread complaints from students and parents over technical glitches during the post-result re-evaluation process, with the Centre bringing in experts from IIT-Madras and IIT-Kanpur and roping in four public sector banks to stabilise the system and strengthen the board's digital infrastructure.

Meanwhile, CBSE has extended the last date for applying for scanned answer sheets for rechecking till May 25 midnight following the disruptions. Sources said Pradhan took serious cognisance of repeated reports of server downtime, payment gateway failures, login disruptions, blurred scanned copies of answer sheets and operational lapses faced by candidates applying for verification and re-evaluation of Class XII board papers.

Officials have been asked to explain the reasons behind the technical failures, preparedness measures adopted before opening the re-evaluation window, and the accountability of agencies and vendors managing the digital infrastructure.

The education minister directed that a team of professors and technical experts from IIT-Madras and IIT-Kanpur be deputed to assist CBSE in ensuring a glitch-free re-evaluation process following reports of technical challenges in the board's post-examination services portal.

According to the ministry, the expert teams will implement focused technological improvements in systems and technical workflows and specifically examine portal stability, server performance and the robustness of the overall IT infrastructure. The IIT teams will also assist CBSE in taking corrective measures to ensure that login authentication systems, user access mechanisms and payment gateways function smoothly and accurately.

Pradhan also spoke with Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman over the technical and payment-related issues faced by students during the process. Following the discussion, it was decided that four public sector banks — State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank and Indian Bank — would assist CBSE in strengthening its payment gateway infrastructure and integration with the post-examination services portal. The banks are expected to help the board establish robust payment protocols to ensure timely transactions, resolve payment glitches and facilitate automatic refunds in cases of excess payments. Pradhan also issued directions to CBSE to undertake a complete overhaul of its payment gateway system.

What's Your Story?

CITY CITY BANG BANG

SANTOSH DESAI

In the beginning, there was the word. Immediately afterwards came the story. But there is a new flavour that is being imparted to this deep need: the rise of modern 'storytelling'. It is a far more directed and purposeful venture, this business of telling stories. Brands need to tell their stories. Individuals' lives must follow a storyline. Startups must create stories to tell prospective investors. Even ideas need to be dressed up as stories if they want to circulate.

There are good reasons why this should be so. Human beings respond to stories viscerally. An idea by itself can be dry and self-absorbed. But stories are told from a listener's perspective. They account for the way the listener receives the story, and strive to make themselves easily grasped. A story gives an idea shape and locates it in an emotional context. A good story makes us cheer for the protagonists; we get recruited to their side.

This is extremely valuable, but it comes at a price. The modern mode of storytelling makes truth instrumental. The entire exercise is constructed backwards from the outcome. The listener is being guided along a track to a pre-determined destination. Everything is purposeful and optimised: the arc, the conflict, overcoming obstacles and a neat consumable resolution.

This form of storytelling makes sense in today's context for several reasons. It is neat, does not get lost in nuance, and is easily compressible. There is an emotional immediacy about it that makes it shareable. And besides, it creates a feeling of profundity in the listener. Profundity at a massive discount: what's not to like?

At a deeper level, this changes the way we think about our lives, for our lives feel a compulsion to turn into stories. We convert experiences into arcs, imagining ourselves as protagonists in a journey, living life with one eye on what kind of story this can be converted into. We end up auditioning instead of living. Every little interaction gets elevated into a life lesson on LinkedIn.

Nowhere has it become as fashionable as it has in business circles. Business is always looking for ways of escaping adulthood, to wriggle out of the appearance of seriousness and maturity that it is forced to wear as a costume. The idea of storytelling offers a road to become plausibly infantile. But the moment you strip away the storytelling elements — the arc, the story about obstacles and life lessons — what you find within is the kind of thing greeting cards would be embarrassed to call wisdom.

Our lives feel a compulsion to turn into stories. We convert experiences into arcs, imagining ourselves as protagonists in a journey, living life with one eye on what kind of story this can be converted into. We end up auditioning instead of living. Every little interaction gets elevated into a life lesson

In this world, what is valued most is authenticity. Storytellers speak of it constantly, partly because it makes the story believable. It seeks to soften the predetermined nature of the message by adding grain to the story.

The typical storyline has an element of the sheepish confessional in it— stumbles, ignorance, and overvaluing of the self, gradually making way for enlightenment and success, that are not necessarily false. But they are carefully selected so as to make the narrative rough around the edges. The messiness of the authentic can never cross a certain boundary, never trespass into territories that are not narratively useful. Authenticity becomes an advertising technique. It simulates the texture of reality while stripping out the unpredictability.

There are two kinds of stories. A closed story is designed to arrive at a point. It is created to make us feel a specific way. It begins with an intention and moves toward a resolution that feels earned but is, in some sense, foreclosed. There is no doubt about what the message is. Most contemporary storytelling sits here.

An open story works differently. It does not aim to land as much as to linger. It still has a shape, but the shape does not converge into meaning. It leaves something ajar, not as a matter of style but in recognition of the nature of reality. You do not come away with a settled conclusion but with a feeling of being disturbed, of having something get unsettled. An open story is a worm in the mind, wriggling uncomfortably long after the story is over.

The difference is not just about endings. It is about who wields authority in the interaction. In a closed story, authority sits with the teller who wields the narrative skillfully. The audience's role is to ooh and aah at the right moments. In an open story, authority is shared. The listener participates in making meaning.

Open stories are not easy to circulate. They are cussed in the way they prod rather than comfort. Interestingly, most Indian epics tell open stories, which allow for interpretation, discussion and disagreement. Many actions described in these sit on a moral hinge, leaving room for debate for a society to question what its values really are.

A great story opens up possibilities; it lets our minds go to places where reality may not. One travels elsewhere from where one returns differently. A great story moves us, not just in terms of emotion but in terms of perspective. We see the world through someone else's heart, and we are just a bit different as a result.

Think of the story as a form of reorientation. Of something that allows us to acknowledge complexity by understanding it in human terms. It gives us a way of reaching for things without grasping them fully. It expands our sense of how things might be, without insisting that they are so. A great story allows us to stay unfinished by refusing completeness. At its best, a story is a rope tossed into the future.

santosh365@gmail.com

12-yr-old found dead in J&K's Budgam dist, rape suspected

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar: Police suspect rape and murder in the death of a 12-year-old girl whose body was found Sunday morning near her home in Galwanpora village of central Kashmir's Budgam district, hours after she went missing, officials said.

"Legal and medical formalities have been completed. Prima facie, it seems a case of rape and murder and all relevant sections of law have been added to FIR," SSP Hariprasad KK said.

"We will use all available resources to crack the case." Police did not disclose further details about circumstances surrounding the death. No arrests had been made as of Sunday evening.

The crime triggered outrage Kashmir. J&K CM Omar Abdullah said his govt will fully support agencies to "ensure exemplary punishment" for the guilty. Former CM Mehbooba Mufti called the killing a reminder of growing vulnerability of women and children.

Sold by mom for ₹16k and 10 saris, 12-yr-old raped by 'buyer', driver

Varanasi: A 12-year-old Bihar girl allegedly sold by her mother "for Rs 16,000 and 10 saris" to a 40-year-old man from Chandauli in neighbouring UP was repeatedly raped by him after a sham temple marriage, only to be abandoned and preyed on by an auto driver in Varanasi before being rescued, reports **Rajeev Dikshit**.

Investigators said Chandauli's Lahru Yadav alias Rakesh, a widower, went to great lengths to stage the sham marriage, reportedly spending around Rs 90,000 on a hair transplant in farway Delhi to appear younger— nearly six times the sum he allegedly shelled out for the child. The girl's statements before Child Welfare Committee, where she was brought after locals found her roaming and crying in Varanasi's Sarnath on May 21 and alerted Uttar Pradesh cops. The mother, Yadav and auto driver Ravi Verma were arrested Saturday, days after a case was filed in Sarnath.

Sarnath ACP Vidush Saxena said the girl told investigators that her mother sold her in Jan this year. Investigators said Yadav lived separately from his family after the death of his wife. He carried out the mock nuptials at the temple Chandauli's Chahania area. Later, he allegedly raped the girl repeatedly and even forced her to work as a domestic help.

According to the investigators, villagers and neighbours warned Yadav that keeping a minor girl as wife could land him in serious legal trouble. Yadav later abandoned the girl near Banaras railway station in Manduadih area of Sarnath on May 19. An FIR was filed on May 22 against the accused under BNS sections on rape and Pocso Act. Sarnath inspector Pankaj Kumar Tripathi said the three were picked up from different locations.

Missing 15-year-old girl found dead 2km from her house in Jharkhand

Jamshedpur: A 15-year-old girl who had been missing since May 21 was found dead in Jharkhand's East Singhbhum district Saturday, **reports B Sridhar**.

The body of Mala Singh, a class 9 student, was discovered in a secluded area around 2km from her home in Nutandih village, police said Sunday.

Family members said Mala had stepped out of her house to bathe at the village pond but never returned. Officer in-charge of Bodam PS, Neeraj Kumar, said further investigation was underway to establish the cause of Mala's death.

Tiger mauls woman to death, injures 2 others in MP village

P.Naveen@timesofindia.com

Bhopal: A 48-year-old woman was killed and two villagers wounded by a tiger which entered a settlement near Bandhavgarh tiger reserve in MP's Umaria late on Saturday. The tiger was later found dead inside a house in the village where it had taken shelter, with forest officials awaiting a postmortem report to determine the cause of its death.

The tiger pounced on the sleeping Phoolbai in the courtyard of her house in Kherba Tola village, killing her on the spot before mauling two others, Dasaiyya and Phulla. Both are in hospital and are said to be critical. CM Mohan Yadav announced an ex-gratia of Rs 25 lakh for Phoolbai's family and directed officials to free medical treatment and compensation for the injured.

After the attacks, the tiger reportedly moved into a nearby house and remained there through the night despite villagers gathering outside and panic spreading. Forest teams rushed in and monitored the animal as efforts began to secure the area.

By Sunday morning, however, the tiger was found dead. Bandhavgarh field director Anupam Sahay said the male tiger, aged around seven, had already died by the time the rescue team darted it.

Restive villagers allegedly prevented cops from taking Phoolbai's body for postmortem for hours, demanding stronger measures to prevent repeated tiger attacks. The situation later turned volatile as the villagers allegedly attacked the forest department team.

Stepdad's name in certs stalls passport, student moves HC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: A 20-year-old college student has moved Gujarat high court to replace her stepfather's name with that of her biological father in school-leaving certificates and marksheets, saying the mismatch was creating problems in passport and visa applications.

After losing her mother during the pandemic, the student returned to live with her biological father in Gandhinagar. She had earlier secured an order from a court in her native Mansa district directing her school to correct its records. She has now approached the HC for changes in her marksheets, too.

Admitting the student's plea, Justice HM Prachchhak of the HC recently issued notices to Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board as well her school authorities, while slotting the matter to be heard next on June 22. According to the plea, the student's parents had separated through a customary divorce when she was very young. For years, her records from Bharuch, where she studied till Class 10 after her mother's remarriage, carried her stepfather's name, which the petition says was entered without going through any legal adoption formalities or procedures.

The student had earlier approached the Mansa court seeking directions to the school as well as Gujarat education board authorities to have her documents corrected.

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Investment of Contributions under NPS Vatsalya.
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Permitted Asset Classes	Indicative Limits
Government Securities & related investments	15 – 20%
Debt Instruments & related investments	10 – 30%
Short-term debt instruments & related investments (Money Market*)	Upto 10%
Equity and Related Investments	50 – 75%

*The money market limit will apply once the scheme corpus exceeds Rs 5 crore.

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Upon attaining majority, the subscriber may exercise:
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c. Withdraw the entire corpus if the total corpus is less than Rs. 8 lakh.
In case of death, the entire corpus is payable.

Subscriber Education and Protection Fund (SEPF) Initiative, by Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority

Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas
Government of India

NOTICE INVITING OFFERS FOR LEGACY SEISMIC DATA REPROCESSING AND INTERPRETATION & 3D SEISMIC API

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF HYDROCARBONS (DGH), Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, invites offers from eligible and qualified companies for undertaking Legacy Seismic Data Reprocessing and Interpretation (P&I) and 3D Seismic Data Acquisition, Processing and Interpretation (API) in sedimentary basins of India.

The programme aims to reprocess legacy seismic data to improve subsurface understanding, identify hydrocarbon prospective areas, and undertake 3D Seismic API in identified regions, thereby enhancing India's energy security and reducing dependence on imports.

The detailed Notice Inviting Offers document, containing geographical locations, scope of work, bid document and contract document, will be made available on the website: https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app

The Bid Publishing Date is 01 June 2026. Interested companies may visit the above website for complete details and updates.

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BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
Office of the Chief Engineer(South),
7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bangalore- 560 009.
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(Through KPP Portal only)

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BJP wins Falta by 1L votes, TMC loses deposit, CPM 2nd

Reality Has Come Out: Suvendu

Rohit Khanna, Dwaipayan Ghosh & Monotosh Chakraborty | TNN

ANI

SMOOTH RIDE: BJP's winning candidate Debangshu Panda

Kolkata: BJP's Debangshu Panda won the Falta assembly repoll in Bengal Sunday by a record 1,09,021 votes, reducing TMC from an 89% vote share and a 1.6-lakh lead in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections to a deposit-losing fourth place with 3.7% of the vote. A wholesale transfer of minority support to CPM lifted the Left party to a surprise second, albeit far behind BJP.

The winning margin was the highest BJP recorded this election, surpassing its 1,04,265-vote win in Matigara-Naxalbari. The party's vote share in Falta, the pocket borough of Diamond Harbour MP and Trinamool's national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, almost doubled from 36.7% in 2021 to 71.2%.

The victory also took BJP's tally in the 294-member assembly to 208.

CM Suvendu Adhikari, who had asked the Falta electorate for a 1-lakh margin, said the result reflected TMC's free fall from grace. "Trinamool took a lead of one-and-a-half lakh votes in this assembly constituency and turned the past election into a joke. Fifteen years later, when people regained their freedom to vote...the reality has come out," he wrote on Facebook. "I will repay your debt through development."

Adhikari said TMC's "infamous Diamond Harbour model" had now become "a model for defeat".

TMC candidate Jahangir Khan, who had announced 48 hours before the repoll that he was "withdrawing" from the fray, received 7,783 votes, losing his deposit in a seat his party had won in four of the previous five assembly elections since 2001.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Abhishek retained the Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha seat, of which Falta is one of seven assembly segments, with a victory margin of 7 lakh-odd votes.

CPM's Sambhu Nath Kurmi polled 40,645 votes this time. Minorities account for more than 30% of Falta's electorate and CPM didn't even field a candidate there in 2021. CPM state secretary Md Salim said the party campaigned for barely a week before the April 29 election but stepped up when a repoll was announced.

NEET requires safeguards like those in JEE, says civil society group

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: In the aftermath of the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case, the People's Health Organisation (PHO) (India) has called for urgent structural reforms in the medical exam process, stating that recurring controversies "have seriously undermined public confidence" in the system.

The PHO, comrising of doctors, is a non-profit organisation formed in 1981, is acclaimed for its HIV interventions. The organisation stated the situation is bound to impact quality healthcare in the long run. There are 22 lakh medical aspirants annually vying for 1.3 lakh seats across 824 medical colleges.

PHO founder Dr Ishwar Gilada said more than half of the available medical seats are in private institutions, where the cost of education can range from Rs 1 crore to Rs 2 crore. The issue, he said, was commercialisation of medical education while govt seats still did not match the demand.

"For an aspirant, the incentive is spending just a few lakhs for leaked papers to have a chance at a govt seat, rather than paying that much at a private medical college," said Dr Gilada. PHO-India urged policymakers to consider adopting operational safeguards similar to those used in Joint Entrance Exam (JEE), which distributes risk through multiple sessions, digital administration, and normalisation processes.

UP Cong chief booked in 2 more FIRs for remarks on PM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Varanasi: Two more FIRs have been registered against UP Congress chief **Ajay Rai** for his alleged derogatory remarks against PM Narendra Modi. The FIRs were lodged on complaints by Varanasi residents Sunita Soni and Aryan Pandya at the Chowk police station in the city on Saturday night.

Rai has been booked under Section 352 (intentional insults intended to provoke a breach of the peace) of BNS. The women alleged Rai has hurt public sentiments by insulting and abusing PM Modi who holds a constitutional position and is the most popular leader of current times.

Earlier on Saturday, BJP functionary Neeraj Rawat had lodged an FIR against Rai for his remarks against Modi and for violating public order during a political gathering in Mahoba on Friday.

Rai has maintained that a purported video showing him making the alleged remarks is "AI-generated."

On Sunday, UP govt ministers and BJP functionaries held a joint press conference in Varanasi and decried Rai's remarks.

Detainees can be housed for 30 days

▶ Continued from Page 1

Each district will have one holding centre where detainees can be housed for up to 30 days.

"Police cannot harass or detain those who have entered India before Dec 31, 2024. Those who are not covered under CAA are illegal immigrants and infiltrators. The state police will detain them and hand them over to the BSF, which will liaise with BDR (Bangladesh Rifles, now known as Border Guard Bangladesh) and deport them," Adhikari said.

The previous govt had refused to implement the Union home ministry's guideline – issued May 2, 2025 – alleging it was part of a plan by the Centre to strip a section of Indians of citizenship. Trinamool insinuated that it was an extension of NRC, CAA and eventually SIR.

Former CM Mamata Banerjee had declared that nobody in Bengal would be sent to a detention centre so long as her party was in office. Parallels were drawn with "transit camps" in Assam that house detainees identified by NRC tribunals for deportation.

The Centre defines holding centres as specialised facilities, distinct from prisons, to house individuals apprehended on suspicion of entering or staying in the country illegally while their nationality is being probed, as well as foreign nationals who have completed prison terms but must remain in custody until deportation or repatriation clearances are obtained.

The NCRB report of 2024 says 905 people were arrested in Bengal that year under the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, and the Foreigners Act, 1946. Foreigners made up 9% of Bengal's prison population of 25,774, according to previous year's NCRB report. Bangladeshis constituted the biggest chunk, with 778 convicts and 1,440 undertrials.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice inviting suggestions/objections on the Application filed by The Tata Power Company Limited for grant of Distribution Licence under Section 14 and Section 15 of Electricity Act, 2003 for three (3) revenue districts of HESCOM namely Belagavi, Uttara Kannada and Dharwad

(Case No. MP/06/2026)

1. The Tata Power Company Limited (Tata Power) has filed an Application **(Case No. MP/06/2026)** before the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC/Commission) for grant of Distribution Licence to TPCL for **the geographically connected areas comprising three (3) revenue districts of HESCOM namely Belagavi, Uttara Kannada and Dharwad** under Sections 14 and 15 of Electricity Act, 2003 ("the Act") read with Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, KERC (Licensing) Regulations, 2004 and other applicable Rules and Regulations. The Commission has directed Tata Power to publish a Public Notice under Section 15 (2) of the Act.
2. **The salient features of the Application are briefly provided below:**

Applicant's Name:	The Tata Power Company Limited
Address of Applicant's Registered Office:	Bombay House 24 Homi Mody Street Mumbai 400 001
Nature of license applied for:	Distribution License under 6th proviso of Section 14 of the Act
Applicant's principal place of business:	**Geographically connected areas comprising three (3) revenue districts of HESCOM namely Belagavi, Uttara Kannada and Dharwad.**

3. **Other salient features of the Application:**
- The Tata Power Company Limited is catering to the power demand of the consumers across Mumbai, Ajmer, and in the states of Delhi and Odisha.
- Tata Power Distribution – Mumbai has a customer base of over 0.8 million consumers in Mumbai across an area of 485 Sq. kms, with a network length of 4850 CKM and more than 99.99% reliability, which is among the highest in the country.
- Tata Power has remarkable performance at Tata Power – DDL, Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), Tata Power Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL), Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL), Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL), Tata Power Ajmer Distribution Limited (TPADL).
- Tata Power has been engaged in the business of distribution of electricity for over a century and is thereby in possession of unrivalled expertise and capabilities to manage the increasingly complex electricity distribution business. The Petitioner intends to leverage multiple synergies and thus cater to the ever-increasing power demand of consumers in the proposed area of supply i.e. the geographically connected area comprising of **three (3) revenue districts of HESCOM namely Belagavi, Uttara Kannada and Dharwad.**
- The proposed area for which The Tata Power Company Limited is seeking Distribution License, presently falls within the distribution area of Hubli Electricity Supply Company Limited (HESCOM).

4. **Legal Status of the Applicant and Registration No.:**
Public Limited Company - CIN [L28920MH1919PLC000567]
5. **Shareholding Pattern:**

Sr. No.	Name of Shareholder	No. of shares held (31st March 2025)
(i)	Promoter & Promoter Group	1497257565
(ii)	Public	1698081982
(iii)	Non Promoter - Non Public	0
(iv)	Shares Underlying DRs	0
(v)	Shares Held By Employee Trust	0
(vi)	Total	3195339547

6. **Management Profile (Board of Directors):**

Sr. No.	Name and Designation	Qualification	Area of Expertise	Experience
1	Mr. Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Non-Independent, Non- Executive Director, Chairperson	• Masters in Computer Applications, Regional Engineering College, Trichy	• Chairman of Tata Sons	Over 36 years
		• Honorary 'Doctor of Letters', Regional Engineering College, Trichy	• Leadership in global business operations	
2	Dr. Praveer Sinha, Managing Director & CEO	• Ph.D. from Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi	• Power sector expert	Over 36 years
		• Masters in Business Law from National Law School, Bangalore	• Leadership in power generation and distribution	
		• Electrical Engineering degree from Delhi College of Engineering		
3	Ms. Anjali Bansal, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Computer Engineering	• Expertise in corporate governance	Over 20 years
		• Master's in International Finance and Business from Columbia University	• Experience in technology and financial services sectors	
4	Mr. Ashok Sinha, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from IIT Kanpur	• Extensive experience in the energy sector	Over 38 years
		• MBA from IIM Bangalore	• Former Chairman and Managing Director of BPCL	
5	Mr. Rajiv Mehrishi, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Master's in History	• Former Comptroller and Auditor General of India	Over 40 years in civil services
		• MBA from University of Strathclyde, UK	• Expertise in public administration and finance	
6	Ms. Vibha Padalkar, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Chartered Accountant	• Managing Director and CEO of HDFC Life Insurance Company	Over 30 years
			• Expertise in finance and insurance sectors	
7	Mr. Saurabh Agrawal, Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from IIT Roorkee	• Group Chief Financial Officer of Tata Sons	Over 25 years
		• PGDM from IIM Calcutta	• Expertise in corporate finance and strategy	
8	Mr. Sanjay V. Bhandarkar, Independent Non-Executive Director	• MBA from XLRI, Jamshedpur	• Former Managing Director of Rothschild India	Over 30 years
			• Experience in investment banking and corporate finance	
9	Mr. Tarun Bajaj, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Commerce from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University	• Former Revenue Secretary, Government of India	Over 34 years in civil services
		• MBA from Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad	• Expertise in finance, taxation, and public administration	
		• M.Sc. from London School of Economics and Political Science		
10	Pramod Agarwal Independent Non-Executive Director	• B. Tech (Civil) - IIT Mumbai	• Former Chairman and Managing Director ('CMD') of Coal India Limited, Principal Secretary in Government of Madhya Pradesh	Over 30 + years in civil services
		• M. Tech (Design Engineering) IIT Delhi.	• Project management, • Strategic alliances • Tactical planning	

7. **Summary of activities and past experience in similar activities:**
In the electricity distribution sector, Tata Power is providing uninterrupted, affordable, and reliable power supply to consumers across Mumbai, Ajmer, and in the states of Delhi and Odisha.
I. **Distribution License in Mumbai:** The Hon'ble MERC granted a Distribution License to Tata Power (Distribution License No.1 of 2014) for a period of 25 years for Mumbai City, and part of Mumbai Suburban Area, (areas of Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation including area covered under Chene and Varsave). Tata Power Distribution – Mumbai has a customer base of over 0.8 Million consumers in Mumbai across an area of 485 Sq. kms., with a network length of 4,850 CKM and peak demand of 1,076 MW, Tata Power Distribution-Mumbai operates a state-of-the-art electricity distribution network with distribution losses of around 1.24%.
II. **Distribution License in Delhi:** Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power – DDL) was incorporated in July 2002 as a Joint Venture of the Tata Power Company Limited (51%) and the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (49%) on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. Tata Power – DDL serves customer base of about 2.1 million, manages an electricity distribution network of about 12500 CKM. The AT&C loss levels have been reduced from 53.1% in 2002 to 5.54% in 2025.
III. **Distribution License in Central Odisha:** Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL) is a Joint Venture between Tata Power and the Government of Odisha with the majority stake being held by Tata Power Company (51%). TPCODL serves a customer base of 3.3 million over a vast distribution area of 29,354 sq. km. Starting from 30.49% at the time of acquisition in June 2020, the AT&C losses now stand at 19.6%. TPCODL manages an electricity distribution network of 114119 Ckt. Km.
IV. **Distribution License in Northern Odisha:** Tata Power Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL) was formed in April 2021 as a Joint Venture between Tata Power (51%) and GRIDCO Ltd (49%) to carry out the function of distribution and retail supply of electricity. TPNODL serves customer base of 2.2 million, spanning across an area of 27920 sq. kms. The AT&C losses for the year stood at 12.6 % at the end of FY 25 which is an achievement of 4.49 % less than the target of 17.09% assigned by the Hon'ble OERC. TPNODL operates 566 power transformers, 81168 distribution transformers and 164629 ckm of Network.
V. **Distribution License in Southern Odisha:** Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) started its operations in January 2021. With a consumer base of about 2.2 million, TPSODL spans for around 48,751 Sq. kms. in the southern parts of Odisha. TPSODL manages and operates 112955 ckm of network. The peak demand recorded was 798 MVA.
VI. **Distribution License in Western Odisha:** Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL) is a Joint Venture between Tata Power (51%) and GRIDCO Limited (49%) and started its operations in January 2021. TPWODL had a registered customer base of 2.2 million covering 48,373 sq. km. TPWODL manages and operates 692 power transformers, 82752 distribution transformers, 179694 Ckt. Km. of Network. The AT&C losses during FY 25 were 17.1 %. Peak demand recorded was 1780 MW.
VII. **Distribution Franchisee in Ajmer:** Tata Power Ajmer Distribution Limited (TPADL) is a distribution franchisee having signed a Distribution Franchisee Agreement (DFA) with Ajmer Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited. TPADL is responsible for operating and maintaining the distribution network in Ajmer City and managing the billing and collection across an area of around 200 Sq. Kms. TPADL has contributed towards reduction of AT&C losses from 17.2% to 7.8%.

8. **Proposed area of supply, its description and number of consumers proposed to be served:** The Tata Power Company Limited seeks to undertake distribution and supply of power in the geographically connected area comprising of three **(3) revenue districts of HESCOM namely Belagavi, Uttara Kannada and Dharwad.** The aforementioned areas cover either entirely or partially the area of **1. Belagavi City Corporation 2. Gokak City Municipal Council 3. Nippani City Municipal Council 4. Dandeli City Municipal Council 5. Karwara City Municipal Council 6. Sirsi City Municipal Council 7. Hubbali- Dharwad City Corporation**
TPC will serve more than 38,500 (Thirty Eight Thousand Five Hundred) consumers by the end of 3 years from grant of Licence.
9. **Contact details of the nodal person from whom copy of application may be obtained for inspection or purchase:**

(i)	Name and Designation of Person	Shri. Manish Dahake, Group Head - Network Planning & Consumer Engineering (City)
(ii)	Address of the office from where to obtain copy of application for inspection or purchase:	The Tata Power Company Limited, Distribution Division, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400 013, India.
(iii)	Detailed application documents along with CD (in English) (on payment of Rs. 150/- in cash or by DD/ Cheque drawn on [The Tata Power Company Limited] payable at Mumbai).	
(iv)	Detailed application documents (in English) (on payment of Rs. 100/-);	
(v)	CD of detailed application document (in English) (on payment of Rs. 50/-);	

10. **Website address from where the copy of application and other documents mentioned therein may be downloaded free of cost:** Website: **www.tatapower.com**
11. The Tata Power Company Limited hereby confirms and declares that the Applicant duly complies with the additional requirements laid down under Rule 3 of The Distribution of Electricity Licence (Additional Requirements of Capital Adequacy, Creditworthiness and Code of Conduct) Rules, 2005 (amended from time time) notified by the Central Government. TPCL has filed Licence Application as detailed hereinabove and also enclosed all the compliance documents as part of the application.
12. In response to the Public Notice published, every person who intends to file suggestions/ objections can submit the same in English or Kannada language in writing to email id: asst.secykerc@gmail.com. In case of difficulty in accessing this feature, the concerned stakeholder can contact the KERC Office on Mobile No.: 8147 144 627 or on email id: asst.secykerc@gmail.com in between 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM on all the working days.
13. A Person who has submitted his / her suggestion / objection through email id mentioned above need not file any hard copy of its submission. Persons who do not have access to electronic media can file their suggestion/ objection in a hard copy addressed to The Secretary, Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, Address: No 16C-1, Millers Road, Kaverappa Layout, Vasantha Nagar, Bengaluru Karnataka 560052. within thirty (30) days from the date of publication of this notice, along with proof of service on Mr. V. H. Wagle, Tata Power Company Limited [Tel: (91-22)-67172953 ,Email: vidyadhar.wagle@tatapower.com] and should carry the full name, postal address and E-mail address, if any, of the sender. Suggestions and/or objections received after **5 PM on 23rd June 2026** shall not be considered. Suggestions/Objections filed through any other mode shall not be considered.
14. TPCL shall reply to each of the objections /comments received within three days of the receipt of the same but not later than **27th June 2026** for all the objections/comments received till **23rd June 2026.**

Sd/-
Vidyadhar Hari Wagle
Chief - Regulatory
The Tata Power Company Limited

Place: Mumbai
Date: 25th May, 2026

TATA
TATA POWER
THE TATA POWER COMPANY LIMITED,
Bombay House, 24, Homi Mody Street, Mumbai - 400 001, India, Tel: (9122) 6665 8282, Fax: (91 22) 6665 8801 Website: www.tatapower.com CIN: L28920MH1919PLC000567

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice inviting suggestions/objection on the Application filed by The Tata Power Company Limited for grant of Distribution Licence under Section 14 and Section 15 of Electricity Act, 2003 for three (3) revenue districts of CESC namely Mysuru, Chamarajanagar and Hassan

(Case No. MP/02/2026)

1. The Tata Power Company Limited (Tata Power) has filed an Application **(Case No.MP/02/2026)** before the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC/Commission) for grant of Distribution Licence to TPCL for **the geographically connected areas comprising three (3) revenue districts of CESC namely Mysuru, Chamarajanagar and Hassan** under Sections 14 and 15 of Electricity Act, 2003 ("the Act") read with Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, KERC (Licensing) Regulations, 2004 and other applicable Rules and Regulations. The Commission has directed Tata Power to publish a Public Notice under Section 15 (2) of the Act.
2. The salient features of the Application are briefly provided below:

Applicant's Name:	The Tata Power Company Limited
Address of Applicant's Registered Office:	Bombay House 24 Homi Mody Street Mumbai 400 001
Nature of license applied for:	Distribution License under 6th proviso of Section 14 of the Act
Applicant's principal place of business:	**Geographically connected areas comprising three (3) revenue districts of CESC namely Mysuru, Chamarajanagar and Hassan**

3. **Other salient features of the Application:**
- The Tata Power Company Limited is catering to the power demand of the consumers across Mumbai, Ajmer, and in the states of Delhi and Odisha.
- Tata Power Distribution – Mumbai has a customer base of over 0.8 million consumers in Mumbai across an area of 485 Sq. kms, with a network length of 4850 CKM and more than 99.99% reliability, which is among the highest in the country.
- Tata Power has remarkable performance at Tata Power – DDL, Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), Tata Power Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL), Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL), Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL), Tata Power Ajmer Distribution Limited (TPADL).
- Tata Power has been engaged in the business of distribution of electricity for over a century and is thereby in possession of unrivalled expertise and capabilities to manage the increasingly complex electricity distribution business. The Petitioner intends to leverage multiple synergies and thus cater to the ever-increasing power demand of consumers in the proposed area of supply i.e. the geographically connected area comprising of three **(3) revenue districts of CESC namely Mysuru, Chamarajanagar and Hassan.**
- The proposed area for which The Tata Power Company Limited is seeking Distribution License, presently falls within the distribution area of **Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited (CESC).**

4. **Legal Status of the Applicant and Registration No.:**
Public Limited Company -CIN [L28920MH1919PLC000567]
5. **Shareholding Pattern:**

Sr. No.	Name of Shareholder	No. of shares held (31st March 2025)
(i)	Promoter & Promoter Group	1497257565
(ii)	Public	1698081982
(iii)	Non Promoter - Non Public	0
(iv)	Shares Underlying DRs	0
(v)	Shares Held By Employee Trust	0
(vi)	Total	3195339547

6. **Management Profile (Board of Directors):**

Sr. No.	Name and Designation	Qualification	Area of Expertise	Experience
1	Mr. Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Non-Independent, Non- Executive Director, Chairperson	• Masters in Computer Applications, Regional Engineering College, Trichy	• Chairman of Tata Sons	Over 36 years
		• Honorary 'Doctor of Letters', Regional Engineering College, Trichy	• Leadership in global business operations	
2	Dr. Praveer Sinha, Managing Director & CEO	• Ph.D. from Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi	• Power sector expert	Over 36 years
		• Masters in Business Law from National Law School, Bangalore	• Leadership in power generation and distribution	
		• Electrical Engineering degree from Delhi College of Engineering		
3	Ms. Anjali Bansal, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Computer Engineering	• Expertise in corporate governance	Over 20 years
		• Master's in International Finance and Business from Columbia University	• Experience in technology and financial services sectors	
4	Mr. Ashok Sinha, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from IIT Kanpur	• Extensive experience in the energy sector	Over 38 years
		• MBA from IIM Bangalore	• Former Chairman and Managing Director of BPCL	
5	Mr. Rajiv Mehrishi, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Master's in History	• Former Comptroller and Auditor General of India	Over 40 years in civil services
		• MBA from University of Strathclyde, UK	• Expertise in public administration and finance	
6	Ms. Vibha Padalkar, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Chartered Accountant	• Managing Director and CEO of HDFC Life Insurance Company	Over 30 years
			• Expertise in finance and insurance sectors	
7	Mr. Saurabh Agrawal, Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from IIT Roorkee	• Group Chief Financial Officer of Tata Sons	Over 25 years
		• PGDM from IIM Calcutta	• Expertise in corporate finance and strategy	
8	Mr. Sanjay V. Bhandarkar, Independent Non-Executive Director	• MBA from XLRI, Jamshedpur	• Former Managing Director of Rothschild India	Over 30 years
			• Experience in investment banking and corporate finance	
9	Mr. Tarun Bajaj, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Commerce from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University	• Former Revenue Secretary, Government of India	Over 34 years in civil services
		• MBA from Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad	• Expertise in finance, taxation, and public administration	
		• M.Sc. from London School of Economics and Political Science		
10	Pramod Agarwal Independent Non-Executive Director	• B. Tech (Civil) - IIT Mumbai	• Former Chairman and Managing Director ('CMD') of Coal India Limited, Principal Secretary in Government of Madhya Pradesh	Over 30 + years in civil services
		• M. Tech (Design Engineering) IIT Delhi.	• Project management, • Strategic alliances • Tactical planning	

7. **Summary of activities and past experience in similar activities:**
In the electricity distribution sector, Tata Power is providing uninterrupted, affordable, and reliable power supply to consumers across Mumbai, Ajmer, and in the states of Delhi and Odisha.
I. **Distribution License in Mumbai:** The Hon'ble MERC granted a Distribution License to Tata Power (Distribution License No.1 of 2014) for a period of 25 years for Mumbai City, and part of Mumbai Suburban Area, (areas of Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation including area covered under Chene and Varsave). Tata Power Distribution – Mumbai has a customer base of over 0.8 Million consumers in Mumbai across an area of 485 Sq. kms., with a network length of 4,850 CKM and peak demand of 1,076 MW, Tata Power Distribution-Mumbai operates a state-of-the-art electricity distribution network with distribution losses of around 1.24%.
II. **Distribution License in Delhi:** Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power – DDL) was incorporated in July 2002 as a Joint Venture of the Tata Power Company Limited (51%) and the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (49%) on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. Tata Power – DDL serves customer base of about 2.1 million, manages an electricity distribution network of about 12500 CKM. The AT&C loss levels have been reduced from 53.1% in 2002 to 5.54% in 2025.
III. **Distribution License in Central Odisha:** Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL) is a Joint Venture between Tata Power and the Government of Odisha with the majority stake being held by Tata Power Company (51%). TPCODL serves a customer base of 3.3 million over a vast distribution area of 29,354 sq. km. Starting from 30.49% at the time of acquisition in June 2020, the AT&C losses now stand at 19.6%. TPCODL manages an electricity distribution network of 114119 Ckt. Km.
IV. **Distribution License in Northern Odisha:** Tata Power Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL) was formed in April 2021 as a Joint Venture between Tata Power (51%) and GRIDCO Ltd (49%) to carry out the function of distribution and retail supply of electricity. TPNODL serves customer base of 2 million, spanning across an area of 27920 sq. kms. The AT&C losses for the year stood at 12.6 % at the end of FY 25 which is an achievement of 4.49 % less than the target of 17.09% assigned by the Hon'ble OERC. TPNODL operates 566 power transformers, 81168 distribution transformers and 164629 ckm of Network.
V. **Distribution License in Southern Odisha:** Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) started its operations in January 2021. With a consumer base of about 2.2 million, TPSODL spans for around 48,751 Sq. kms. in the southern parts of Odisha. TPSODL manages and operates 112955 ckt. Km. of Network. The peak demand recorded was 798 MVA.
VI. **Distribution License in Western Odisha:** Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL) is a Joint Venture between Tata Power (51%) and GRIDCO Limited (49%) and started its operations in January 2021. TPWODL had a registered customer base of 2.2 million covering 48,373 sq. km. TPWODL manages and operates 692 power transformers, 82752 distribution transformers, 179694 Ckt. Km. of Network. The AT&C losses during FY 25 were 17.1 %. Peak demand recorded was 1780 MW.
VII. **Distribution Franchisee in Ajmer:** Tata Power Ajmer Distribution Limited (TPADL) is a distribution franchisee having signed a Distribution Franchisee Agreement (DFA) with Ajmer Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited. TPADL is responsible for operating and maintaining the distribution network in Ajmer City and managing the billing and collection across an area of around 200 Sq. Kms. TPADL has contributed towards reduction of AT&C losses from 17.2% to 7.8%.

8. **Proposed area of supply, its description and number of consumers proposed to be served:** The Tata Power Company Limited seeks to undertake distribution and supply of power in the geographically connected area comprising of three **(3) revenue districts of of CESC namely Mysuru, Chamarajanagar and Hassan.** The aforementioned areas cover either entirely or partially the area of **1. Mysuru City Corporation 2. Chamarajanagara City Municipal Council 3. Kollegala City Municipal Council 4. Arasikere City Municipal Council 5. Hassan City Municipal Council**
TPC will serve more than 48,000 (Forty-Eight Thousand) consumers by the end of 3 years from Grant of Licence.
9. **Contact details of the nodal person from whom copy of application may be obtained for inspection or purchase:**

(i)	Name and Designation of Person	Shri Manish Dahake, Group Head - Network Planning & Consumer Engineering (City)
(ii)	Address of the office from where to obtain copy of application for inspection or purchase:	The Tata Power Company Limited, Distribution Division, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400 013, India
(iii)	Detailed application documents along with CD (in English) (on payment of Rs. 150/- in cash or by DD/ Cheque drawn on [The Tata Power Company Limited] payable at Mumbai).	
(iv)	Detailed application documents (in English) (on payment of Rs. 100/-);	
(v)	CD of detailed application document (in English) (on payment of Rs. 50/-);	

10. Website address from where the copy of application and other documents mentioned therein may be downloaded free of cost: Website: **www.tatapower.com**
11. The Tata Power Company Limited hereby confirms and declares that the Applicant duly complies with the additional requirements laid down under Rule 3 of The Distribution of Electricity Licence (Additional Requirements of Capital Adequacy, Creditworthiness and Code of Conduct) Rules, 2005 (amended from time time) notified by the Central Government. TPC has filed Licence Application as detailed hereinabove and also enclosed all the compliance documents as part of the application.
12. In response to the Public Notice published, every person who intends to file suggestions/ objections can submit the same in English or Kannada language in writing to email id: asst.secykerc@gmail.com. In case of difficulty in accessing this feature, the concerned stakeholder can contact the KERC Office on Mobile No.: 8147 144 627 or on email id: asst.secykerc@gmail.com in between 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM on all the working days.
13. A Person who has submitted his / her suggestion / objection through email id mentioned above need not file any hard copy of its submission. Persons who do not have access to electronic media can file their suggestion/ objection in a hard copy addressed to The Secretary, Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, Address: No 16C-1, Millers Road, Kaverappa Layout, Vasantha Nagar, Bengaluru Karnataka 560052. within thirty (30) days from the date of publication of this notice, along with proof of service on Mr. V. H. Wagle, Tata Power Company Limited [Tel: (91-22)-67172953 ,Email: vidyadhar.wagle@tatapower.com] and should carry the full name, postal address and E-mail address, if any, of the sender. Suggestions and/or objections received after **5 PM on 23rd June 2026** shall not be considered. Suggestions/Objections filed through any other mode shall not be considered.
14. TPC shall reply to each of the objections /comments received within three days of the receipt of the same but not later than **27th June 2026** for all the objections/comments received till **23rd June 2026.**

Sd/-
Vidyadhar Hari Wagle
Chief - Regulatory
The Tata Power Company Limited

Place: Mumbai
Date: 25th May, 2026

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THE TATA POWER COMPANY LIMITED,

Bombay House, 24, Homi Mody Street, Mumbai - 400 001, India, Tel: (9122) 6665 8282, Fax: (91 22) 6665 8801 Website: www.tatapower.com CIN: L28920MH1919PLC000567

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice inviting suggestions/objection on the Application filed by The Tata Power Company Limited for grant of Distribution Licence under Section 14 and Section 15 of Electricity Act, 2003 for Six (6) revenue districts of BESCOM namely Chikkballapura, Kolara, Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, Tumakuru and Chitradurga

(Case No. MP/03/2026)

1. The Tata Power Company Limited (Tata Power) has filed an Application **(Case No. MP/03/2026)** before the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC/Commission) for grant of Distribution Licence to TPCL for **the geographically connected areas comprising Six (6) revenue districts of BESCOM namely Chikkballapura, Kolara, Bengaluru Rural, Ramnagara, Tumakuru and Chitradurga** under Sections 14 and 15 of Electricity Act, 2003 ("the Act") read with Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, KERC (Licensing) Regulations, 2004 and other applicable Rules and Regulations. The Commission has directed Tata Power to publish a Public Notice under Section 15 (2) of the Act.
2. **The salient features of the Application are briefly provided below:**

Applicant's Name:	The Tata Power Company Limited
Address of Applicant's Registered Office:	Bombay House 24 Homi Mody Street Mumbai 400 001
Nature of license applied for:	Distribution License under 6th proviso of Section 14 of the Act
Applicant's principal place of business:	**Geographically connected areas comprising Six (6) revenue districts of BESCOM namely Chikkballapura, Kolara, Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, Tumakuru and Chitradurga**

3. **Other salient features of the Application:**
- The Tata Power Company Limited is catering to the power demand of the consumers across Mumbai, Ajmer, and in the states of Delhi and Odisha.
- Tata Power Distribution – Mumbai has a customer base of over 0.8 million consumers in Mumbai across an area of 485 Sq. kms, with a network length of 4850 CKM and more than 99.99% reliability, which is among the highest in the country.
- Tata Power has remarkable performance at Tata Power – DDL, Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), Tata Power Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL), Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL), Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL), Tata Power Ajmer Distribution Limited (TPADL).
- Tata Power has been engaged in the business of distribution of electricity for over a century and is thereby in possession of unrivalled expertise and capabilities to manage the increasingly complex electricity distribution business. The Petitioner intends to leverage multiple synergies and thus cater to the ever-increasing power demand of consumers in the proposed area of supply i.e. the geographically connected area comprising of **Six (6) revenue districts of BESCOM namely Chikkballapura, Kolara, Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, Tumakuru and Chitradurga.**
- The proposed area for which The Tata Power Company Limited is seeking Distribution License, presently falls within the distribution area of **Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM).**

4. **Legal Status of the Applicant and Registration No.:**
Public Limited Company -CIN [L28920MH1919PLC000567]
5. **Shareholding Pattern:**

Sr. No.	Name of Shareholder	No. of shares held (31st March 2025)
(i)	Promoter & Promoter Group	1497257565
(ii)	Public	1698081982
(iii)	Non Promoter - Non Public	0
(iv)	Shares Underlying DRs	0
(v)	Shares Held By Employee Trust	0
(vi)	Total	3195339547

6. **Management Profile (Board of Directors):**

Sr. No.	Name and Designation	Qualification	Area of Expertise	Experience
1	Mr. Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Non-Independent, Non- Executive Director, Chairperson	• Masters in Computer Applications, Regional Engineering College, Trichy	• Chairman of Tata Sons	Over 36 years
		• Honorary 'Doctor of Letters', Regional Engineering College, Trichy	• Leadership in global business operations	
2	Dr. Praveer Sinha, Managing Director & CEO	• Ph.D. from Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi	• Power sector expert	Over 36 years
		• Masters in Business Law from National Law School, Bangalore	• Leadership in power generation and distribution	
		• Electrical Engineering degree from Delhi College of Engineering		
3	Ms. Anjali Bansal, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Computer Engineering	• Expertise in corporate governance	Over 20 years
		• Master's in International Finance and Business from Columbia University	• Experience in technology and financial services sectors	
4	Mr. Ashok Sinha, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from IIT Kanpur	• Extensive experience in the energy sector	Over 38 years
		• MBA from IIM Bangalore	• Former Chairman and Managing Director of BPCL	
5	Mr. Rajiv Mehrishi, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Master's in History	• Former Comptroller and Auditor General of India	Over 40 years in civil services
		• MBA from University of Strathclyde, UK	• Expertise in public administration and finance	
6	Ms. Vibha Padalkar, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Chartered Accountant	• Managing Director and CEO of HDFC Life Insurance Company	Over 30 years
			• Expertise in finance and insurance sectors	
7	Mr. Saurabh Agrawal, Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from IIT Roorkee	• Group Chief Financial Officer of Tata Sons	Over 25 years
		• PGDM from IIM Calcutta	• Expertise in corporate finance and strategy	
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			• Experience in investment banking and corporate finance	
9	Mr. Tarun Bajaj, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Commerce from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University	• Former Revenue Secretary, Government of India	Over 34 years in civil services
		• MBA from Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad	• Expertise in finance, taxation, and public administration	
		• M.Sc. from London School of Economics and Political Science		
10	Pramod Agarwal Independent Non-Executive Director	• B. Tech (Civil) - IIT Mumbai	• Former Chairman and Managing Director ('CMD') of Coal India Limited, Principal Secretary in Government of Madhya Pradesh	Over 30 + years in civil services
		• M. Tech (Design Engineering) IIT Delhi.	• Project management, • Strategic alliances • Tactical planning	

7. **Summary of activities and past experience in similar activities:**
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IV. **Distribution License in Northern Odisha:** Tata Power Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL) was formed in April 2021 as a Joint Venture between Tata Power (51%) and GRIDCO Ltd (49%) to carry out the function of distribution and retail supply of electricity. TPNODL serves customer base of 2 million, spanning across an area of 27920 sq. kms. The AT&C losses for the year stood at 12.6 % at the end of FY 25 which is an achievement of 4.49 % less than the target of 17.09% assigned by the Hon'ble OERC. TPNODL operates 566 power transformers, 81168 distribution transformers and 164629 ckm of Network.
V. **Distribution License in Southern Odisha:** Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) started its operations in January 2021. With a consumer base of about 2.2 million, TPSODL spans for around 48,751 Sq. kms. in the southern parts of Odisha. TPSODL manages and operates 112955 ckm of network. The peak demand recorded was 798 MVA.
VI. **Distribution License in Western Odisha:** Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL) is a Joint Venture between Tata Power (51%) and GRIDCO Limited (49%) and started its operations in January 2021. TPWODL had a registered customer base of 2.2 million covering 48,373 sq. km. TPWODL manages and operates 692 power transformers, 82752 distribution transformers, 179694 Ckt. Km. of Network. The AT&C losses during FY 25 were 17.1 %. Peak demand recorded was 1780 MW.
VII. **Distribution Franchisee in Ajmer:** Tata Power Ajmer Distribution Limited (TPADL) is a distribution franchisee having signed a Distribution Franchisee Agreement (DFA) with Ajmer Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited. TPADL is responsible for operating and maintaining the distribution network in Ajmer City and managing the billing and collection across an area of around 200 Sq. Kms. TPADL has contributed towards reduction of AT&C losses from 17.2% to 7.8%.

8. **Proposed area of supply, its description and number of consumers proposed to be served:** The Tata Power Company Limited seeks to undertake distribution and supply of power in the geographically connected area comprising of **Six (6) revenue districts of BESCOM namely Chikkballapur, Kolar, Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, Tumakuru and Chitradurga.** The aforementioned areas cover either entirely or partially the area of **1. Tumakuru City Corporation 2. Chikkaballapur City Municipal Council 3. Chintamani City Municipal Council 4. Gowribidanur City Municipal Council 5. Shidlaghatta City Municipal Council 6. Kolar City Municipal Council 7. Mulbagal City Municipal Council 8. Robertsonpet City Municipal Council 9. Doddaballapur City Municipal Council 10. Hosakote City Municipal Council 11. Nelamangala City Municipal Council 12. Chanapatana City Municipal Council 13. Kanakapura City Municipal Council 14. Ramanagara City Municipal Council 15. Sira City Municipal Council 16. Chitradurga City Municipal Council 17. Challakere City Municipal Council 18. Hiriyur City Municipal Council**
TPCL will serve more than 186,500 (One hundred eighty-six thousand five hundred) consumers by the end of 3 years from grant of Licence.
9. Contact details of the nodal person from whom copy of application may be obtained for inspection or purchase:

(i)	Name and Designation of Person	Shri Manish Dahake, Group Head - Network Planning & Consumer Engineering (City)
(ii)	Address of the office from where to obtain copy of application for inspection or purchase:	The Tata Power Company Limited, Distribution Division, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400 013, India
(iii)	Detailed application documents along with CD (in English) (on payment of Rs. 150/- in cash or by DD/ Cheque drawn on [The Tata Power Company Limited] payable at Mumbai).	
(iv)	Detailed application documents (in English) (on payment of Rs. 100/-);	
(v)	CD of detailed application document (in English) (on payment of Rs. 50/-);	

10. Website address from where the copy of application and other documents mentioned therein may be downloaded free of cost: Website: **www.tatapower.com**
11. The Tata Power Company Limited hereby confirms and declares that the Applicant duly complies with the additional requirements laid down under Rule 3 of The Distribution of Electricity Licence (Additional Requirements of Capital Adequacy, Creditworthiness and Code of Conduct) Rules, 2005 (amended from time time) notified by the Central Government. TPC has filed Licence Application as detailed hereinabove and also enclosed all the compliance documents as part of the application.
12. In response to the Public Notice published, every person who intends to file suggestions/ objections can submit the same in English or Kannada language in writing to email id: asst.secykerc@gmail.com. In case of difficulty in accessing this feature, the concerned stakeholder can contact the KERC Office on Mobile No.: 8147 144 627 or on email id: asst.secykerc@gmail.com in between 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM on all the working days.
13. A Person who has submitted his / her suggestion / objection through email id mentioned above need not file any hard copy of its submission. Persons who do not have access to electronic media can file their suggestion/ objection in a hard copy addressed to The Secretary, Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, Address: No 16C-1, Millers Road, Kaverappa Layout, Vasantha Nagar, Bengaluru Karnataka 560052. within thirty (30) days from the date of publication of this notice, along with proof of service on Mr. V. H. Wagle, Tata Power Company Limited [Tel: (91-22)-67172953 ,Email: vidyadhar.wagle@tatapower.com] and should carry the full name, postal address and E-mail address, if any, of the sender. Suggestions and/or objections received after **5 PM on 23rd June 2026** shall not be considered. Suggestions/Objections filed through any other mode shall not be considered.
14. TPC shall reply to each of the objections /comments received within three days of the receipt of the same but not later than **27th June 2026** for all the objections/comments received till **23rd June 2026.**

Sd/-
Vidyadhar Hari Wagle
Chief - Regulatory
The Tata Power Company Limited

Place: Mumbai
Date: 25th May, 2026

TATA

TATA POWER

THE TATA POWER COMPANY LIMITED,

Bombay House, 24, Homi Mody Street, Mumbai - 400 001, India, Tel: (9122) 6665 8282, Fax: (91 22) 6665 8801 Website: www.tatapower.com CIN: L28920MH1919PLC000567

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice inviting suggestions/objection on the Application filed by The Tata Power Company Limited for grant of Distribution Licence under Section 14 and Section 15 of Electricity Act, 2003 for three (3) revenue districts of MESCOM namely Shivamogga, Dakshin Kannada and Udupi

(Case No. MP/04/2026)

1. The Tata Power Company Limited (Tata Power) has filed an Application **(Case No. MP/04/2026)** before the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC/Commission) for grant of Distribution Licence to TPCL for **the geographically connected areas comprising three (3) revenue districts of MESCOM namely Shivamogga, Dakshin Kannada and Udupi** under Sections 14 and 15 of Electricity Act, 2003 ("the Act") read with Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, KERC (Licensing) Regulations, 2004 and other applicable Rules and Regulations. The Commission has directed Tata Power to publish a Public Notice under Section 15 (2) of the Act.
2. **The salient features of the Application are briefly provided below:**

Applicant's Name:	The Tata Power Company Limited
Address of Applicant's Registered Office:	Bombay House 24 Homi Mody Street Mumbai 400 001
Nature of license applied for:	Distribution License under 6th proviso of Section 14 of the Act
Applicant's principal place of business:	**Geographically connected areas comprising Three (3) revenue districts of MESCOM namely Shivamogga, Dakshin Kannada and Udupi**

3. **Other salient features of the Application:**
- The Tata Power Company Limited is catering to the power demand of the consumers across Mumbai, Ajmer, and in the states of Delhi and Odisha.
- Tata Power Distribution – Mumbai has a customer base of over 0.8 million consumers in Mumbai across an area of 485 Sq. kms, with a network length of 4850 CKM and more than 99.99% reliability, which is among the highest in the country.
- Tata Power has remarkable performance at Tata Power – DDL, Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), Tata Power Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL), Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL), Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL), Tata Power Ajmer Distribution Limited (TPADL).
- Tata Power has been engaged in the business of distribution of electricity for over a century and is thereby in possession of unrivalled expertise and capabilities to manage the increasingly complex electricity distribution business. The Petitioner intends to leverage multiple synergies and thus cater to the ever-increasing power demand of consumers in the proposed area of supply i.e. the geographically connected area comprising of **Three (3) revenue districts of MESCOM namely namely Shivamogga, Dakshin Kannada and Udupi.**
- The proposed area for which The Tata Power Company Limited is seeking Distribution License, presently falls within the distribution area of **Mangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (MESCOM).**

4. **Legal Status of the Applicant and Registration No.:**
Public Limited Company -CIN [L28920MH1919PLC000567]
5. **Shareholding Pattern:**

Sr. No.	Name of Shareholder	No. of shares held (31st March 2025)
(i)	Promoter & Promoter Group	1497257565
(ii)	Public	1698081982
(iii)	Non Promoter - Non Public	0
(iv)	Shares Underlying DRs	0
(v)	Shares Held By Employee Trust	0
(vi)	Total	3195339547

6. **Management Profile (Board of Directors):**

Sr. No.	Name and Designation	Qualification	Area of Expertise	Experience
1	Mr. Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Non-Independent, Non- Executive Director, Chairperson	• Masters in Computer Applications, Regional Engineering College, Trichy	• Chairman of Tata Sons	Over 36 years
		• Honorary 'Doctor of Letters', Regional Engineering College, Trichy	• Leadership in global business operations	
2	Dr. Praveer Sinha, Managing Director & CEO	• Ph.D. from Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi	• Power sector expert	Over 36 years
		• Master's in Business Law from National Law School, Bangalore	• Leadership in power generation and distribution	
		• Electrical Engineering degree from Delhi College of Engineering		
3	Ms. Anjali Bansal, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Computer Engineering	• Expertise in corporate governance	Over 20 years
		• Master's in International Finance and Business from Columbia University	• Experience in technology and financial services sectors	
4	Mr. Ashok Sinha, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from IIT Kanpur	• Extensive experience in the energy sector	Over 38 years
		• MBA from IIM Bangalore	• Former Chairman and Managing Director of BPCL	
5	Mr. Rajiv Mehrishi, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Master's in History	• Former Comptroller and Auditor General of India	Over 40 years in civil services
		• MBA from University of Strathclyde, UK	• Expertise in public administration and finance	
6	Ms. Vibha Padalkar, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Chartered Accountant	• Managing Director and CEO of HDFC Life Insurance Company	Over 30 years
			• Expertise in finance and insurance sectors	
7	Mr. Saurabh Agrawal, Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from IIT Roorkee	• Group Chief Financial Officer of Tata Sons	Over 25 years
		• PGDM from IIM Calcutta	• Expertise in corporate finance and strategy	
8	Mr. Sanjay V. Bhandarkar, Independent Non-Executive Director	• MBA from XLRI, Jamshedpur	• Former Managing Director of Rothschild India	Over 30 years
			• Experience in investment banking and corporate finance	
9	Mr. Tarun Bajaj, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Commerce from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University	• Former Revenue Secretary, Government of India	Over 34 years in civil services
		• MBA from Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad	• Expertise in finance, taxation, and public administration	
		• M.Sc. from London School of Economics and Political Science		
10	Pramod Agarwal Independent Non-Executive Director	• B. Tech (Civil) - IIT Mumbai	• Former Chairman and Managing Director ('CMD') of Coal India Limited, Principal Secretary in Government of Madhya Pradesh	Over 30 + years in civil services
		• M. Tech (Design Engineering) IIT Delhi.	• Project management, • Strategic alliances • Tactical planning	

7. **Summary of activities and past experience in similar activities:**
In the electricity distribution sector, Tata Power is providing uninterrupted, affordable, and reliable power supply to consumers across Mumbai, Ajmer, and in the states of Delhi and Odisha.
I. **Distribution License in Mumbai:** The Hon'ble MERC granted a Distribution License to Tata Power (Distribution License No.1 of 2014) for a period of 25 years for Mumbai City, and part of Mumbai Suburban Area, (areas of Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation including area covered under Chene and Varsave). Tata Power Distribution – Mumbai has a customer base of over 0.8 Million consumers in Mumbai across an area of 485 Sq. kms., with a network length of 4,850 CKM and peak demand of 1,076 MW, Tata Power Distribution-Mumbai operates a state-of-the-art electricity distribution network with distribution losses of around 1.24%.
II. **Distribution License in Delhi:** Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power – DDL) was incorporated in July 2002 as a Joint Venture of the Tata Power Company Limited (51%) and the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (49%) on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. Tata Power – DDL serves customer base of about 2.1 million, manages an electricity distribution network of about 12500 CKM. The AT&C loss levels have been reduced from 53.1% in 2002 to 5.54% in 2025.
III. **Distribution License in Central Odisha:** Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL) is a Joint Venture between Tata Power and the Government of Odisha with the majority stake being held by Tata Power Company (51%). TPCODL serves a customer base of 3.3 million over a vast distribution area of 29,354 sq. km. Starting from 30.49% at the time of acquisition in June 2020, the AT&C losses now stand at 19.6%. TPCODL manages an electricity distribution network of 114119 Ckt. Km.
IV. **Distribution License in Northern Odisha:** Tata Power Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL) was formed in April 2021 as a Joint Venture between Tata Power (51%) and GRIDCO Ltd (49%) to carry out the function of distribution and retail supply of electricity. TPNODL serves customer base of 2 million, spanning across an area of 27920 sq. kms. The AT&C losses for the year stood at 12.6 % at the end of FY 25 which is an achievement of 4.49 % less than the target of 17.09% assigned by the Hon'ble OERC. TPNODL operates 566 power transformers, 81168 distribution transformers and 164629 ckm of Network.
V. **Distribution License in Southern Odisha:** Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) started its operations in January 2021. With a consumer base of about 2.2 million, TPSODL spans for around 48,751 Sq. kms. in the southern parts of Odisha. TPSODL manages and operates 112955 ckm of network. The peak demand recorded was 798 MVA.
VI. **Distribution License in Western Odisha:** Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL) is a Joint Venture between Tata Power (51%) and GRIDCO Limited (49%) and started its operations in January 2021. TPWODL had a registered customer base of 2.2 million covering 48,373 sq. km. TPWODL manages and operates 692 power transformers, 82752 distribution transformers, 179694 Ckt. Km. of Network. The AT&C losses during FY 25 were 17.1 %. Peak demand recorded was 1780 MW.
VII. **Distribution Franchisee in Ajmer:** Tata Power Ajmer Distribution Limited (TPADL) is a distribution franchisee having signed a Distribution Franchisee Agreement (DFA) with Ajmer Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited. TPADL is responsible for operating and maintaining the distribution network in Ajmer City and managing the billing and collection across an area of around 200 Sq. Kms. TPADL has contributed towards reduction of AT&C losses from 17.2% to 7.8%.

8. **Proposed area of supply, its description and number of consumers proposed to be served:** The Tata Power Company Limited seeks to undertake distribution and supply of power in the geographically connected area comprising of **three (3) revenue districts of MESCOM namely Shivamogga, Dakshin Kannada and Udupi.** The aforementioned areas cover either entirely or partially the area of **1. Shivamogga City Corporation 2. Mangaluru City Corporation 3. Udupi City Municipal Council 4. Shivamogga Mahanagara Palike 5. Ullal City Municipal Council**
TPCL will serve more than 34,600 (Thirty-Four Thousand Six Hundred) consumers by the end of 3 years from grant of Licence.
9. **Contact details of the nodal person from whom copy of application may be obtained for inspection or purchase:**

(i)	Name and Designation of Person	Shri. Manish Dahake, Group Head - Network Planning & Consumer Engineering (City)
(ii)	Address of the office from where to obtain copy of application for inspection or purchase:	The Tata Power Company Limited, Distribution Division, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400 013, India.
(iii)	Detailed application documents along with CD (in English) (on payment of Rs. 150/- in cash or by DD/ Cheque drawn on [The Tata Power Company Limited] payable at Mumbai).	
(iv)	Detailed application documents (in English) (on payment of Rs. 100/-);	
(v)	CD of detailed application document (in English) (on payment of Rs. 50/-);	

10. **Website address from where the copy of application and other documents mentioned therein may be downloaded free of cost:** Website: **www.tatapower.com**
11. The Tata Power Company Limited hereby confirms and declares that the Applicant duly complies with the additional requirements laid down under Rule 3 of The Distribution of Electricity Licence (Additional Requirements of Capital Adequacy, Creditworthiness and Code of Conduct) Rules, 2005 (amended from time time) notified by the Central Government. TPC has filed Licence Application as detailed hereinabove and also enclosed all the compliance documents as part of the application.
12. In response to the Public Notice published, every person who intends to file suggestions/ objections can submit the same in English or Kannada language in writing to email id: asst.secykerc@gmail.com. In case of difficulty in accessing this feature, the concerned stakeholder can contact the KERC Office on Mobile No.: 8147 144 627 or on email id: asst.secykerc@gmail.com in between 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM on all the working days.
13. A Person who has submitted his / her suggestion / objection through email id mentioned above need not file any hard copy of its submission. Persons who do not have access to electronic media can file their suggestion/ objection in a hard copy addressed to The Secretary, Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, Address: No 16C-1, Millers Road, Kaverappa Layout, Vasantha Nagar, Bengaluru Karnataka 560052. within thirty (30) days from the date of publication of this notice, along with proof of service on Mr. V. H. Wagle, Tata Power Company Limited [Tel: (91-22)-67172953 ,Email: vidyadhar.wagle@tatapower.com] and should carry the full name, postal address and E-mail address, if any, of the sender. Suggestions and/or objections received after **5 PM on 23rd June 2026** shall not be considered. Suggestions/Objections filed through any other mode shall not be considered.
14. TPC shall reply to each of the objections /comments received within three days of the receipt of the same but not later than **27th June 2026** for all the objections/comments received till **23rd June 2026.**

Sd/-
Vidyadhar Hari Wagle
Chief - Regulatory
The Tata Power Company Limited

Place: Mumbai
Date: 25th May, 2026

Twisha cremated post AIIMS autopsy, SC to hear case today

AIIMS Findings To Be Submitted Directly To CBI

Jamal Ayub & Anuja Jaiswal | TNN

Twisha's brother, Major Harshit Sharma, lit the pyre on Sunday

Bhopal/New Delhi: Model-turned-actor Twisha Sharma was cremated on Sunday evening after a four-member forensic team from AIIMS Delhi conducted a second autopsy ordered by Madhya Pradesh HC, bringing the 12-day wait for her family to an end. Twisha's brother, Major Harshit Sharma, lit the pyre.

"We cannot imagine life without her. The support we have received gives us strength, and I am confident justice will be served..... I am grateful to Supreme Court for stepping in to ensure fairness," father Navnidhi Sharma said.

Supreme Court has taken suo motu cognisance of the case. A bench led by CJI Surya Kant, alongside Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, will hear the matter on Monday. Twisha, the daughter-in-law of retired judge Giribala Singh, was found dead at her marital home in Bhopal on May 12. Her in-laws said she died by suicide, while her parents alleged repeated dowry harassment. Twisha's husband Samarth Singh has been arrested.

The family challenged the first autopsy and sought an independent forensic review, alleging inconsistencies in the investigation. Sources said the final report could take time as lab examinations are pending.

The Delhi team conducted the second autopsy at AIIMS Bhopal for about three hours, focusing on preserving evidence and examining wounds the family alleges were overlooked during the initial examination. Investigators examined whether Twisha's death could be linked to suicide, trauma or intoxication. Viscera samples were collected, while stomach, liver and kidney tissue were preserved for toxicology analysis.

Doctors also examined the heart for any sign of myocardial infarction, the lungs for possible poisoning and the head for clots.

Histopathology and toxicology tests will be conducted in Delhi. Sources said findings from the first autopsy would be legally compared with the AIIMS report. Dr Sudhir Gupta, head of forensic medicine at AIIMS Delhi, said the fresh autopsy had been completed.

Officials said the team conducted full-body X-rays to check for old injuries and other relevant details. Doctors said the board would deliberate on the findings over three to four days before finalising its conclusions. Gupta said the team independently interacted with Twisha's family and took written queries regarding issues they wanted examined. The findings will be submitted directly to CBI.

Delhi Gymkhana Club to move court against govt order

Members Say Reasons Given For Eviction 'Frivolous'

Dipak Dash & Meghna Dhulia | TNN

> So much history, so many memories... Change may be necessary, but **history and legacy deserve thoughtful preservation**
> —Puducherry LG Kiran Bedi
>
> The greatest discipline is maintained here... Everybody is screened... Now the prime minister's residence is also shifting. **What security concern is there... this is just fictitious**
> —Nitin Verma, member

New Delhi: The stage is set for multiple legal battles as permanent members and employees of Delhi Gymkhana Club (DGC) gear up to challenge Centre's order in Delhi High Court to hand over the club's 27.3-acre prime land. Several members rejected govt's reasoning that the club is located at a "highly sensitive and strategic area" and its future use for "strengthening and securing of defence infrastructure and other vital public security purposes".

Club members said senior advocate and Congress MP Abhishek Manu Singhvi has been engaged to represent members of DGC, which has been at 2 Safdarjung Road for over 113 years. Two petitions are likely to be filed — one by members and another by the club's 600-odd employees. The club's permanent members had a marathon meeting Sunday evening to decide the legal course of action, a day after Land and Development Office, which comes under housing and urban affairs ministry, directed DGC to hand over its entire premises — buildings, lawns and fittings. L&DO has asked DGC to vacate the premises by June 5 by prematurely terminating the "perpetual lease".

On Saturday, a govt-appointed general committee had informed club members that it would meet ministry officials and seek clarity on issues in the interest of members and employees. However, a person involved in the deliberations said, "What will the govt-appointed committee tell to govt against its order? So, the only option left with us is to approach the court."

GOATs going for lakhs at Bhopal Eid market

Tohid.Qureshi
@timesofindia.com

A vendor holds a goat on sale at a livestock market in Bhopal

Bhopal: Bucks, bling and bidding wars before Bakrid — GOAT season has hit Bhopal. Greatest Of All Time? Try goats lowered by crane onto floodlit stages, draped in garlands, hoisted on hydraulic platforms. Crowds crane necks. Phones rise like pasture grass in monsoon.

Fifteen days before Eid-ul-Azha (May 27-28), the Madhya Pradesh capital turns livestock into live spectacle. Wealthy buyers fly in from Mumbai and New Delhi for a glimpse of bucks worth several lakhs of rupees.

Months earlier, breeders quietly separate a handful of kids from hundreds at farms across Bhopal. Chosen for glossy coats, long ears and broad frames, mostly from Kota and Jamnapari bloodlines, they are raised like thoroughbreds headed for a championship ring.

"They can grow to 110cm (3.6ft) tall and weigh up to 180kg if fed well," said Mohammad Sarwar, owner of SF Ali Goat Farm, a trader for 12 years. Then begins the pampering fit for pedigree stock — air-cooled sheds, diets rich in grams, leaves and dry fruits, daily walks and massages, strictly no public appearances. Growth charts are watched like commodity tickers before a market opening. Names come straight from Bollywood posters and swagger-heavy scripts — Sikandar, Baba, Raees, Pathan, Gulabi Badshah, King.

THE TIMES OF INDIA
Education TIMES
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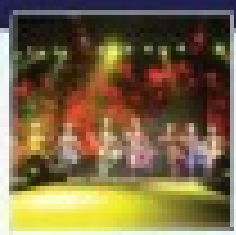

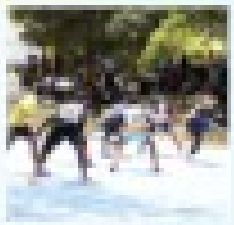

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TATA POWER

THE TATA POWER COMPANY LIMITED,

Bombay House, 24, Homi Mody Street, Mumbai - 400 001, India. Tel: (9122) 6665 8282, Fax: (91 22) 6665 8801 Website: www.tatapower.com CIN: L28920MH1919PLC000567

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice inviting suggestions/objection on the Application filed by The Tata Power Company Limited for grant of Distribution Licence under Section 14 and Section 15 of Electricity Act, 2003 for four (4) revenue districts of GESCOM namely Ballari, Kalaburagi (Gulbarga), Raichur and Yadgir.

(Case No. MP/05/2026)

1. The Tata Power Company Limited (Tata Power) has filed an Application **(Case No. MP /05/2026)** before the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC/Commission) for grant of Distribution Licence to TPCL for **the geographically connected areas comprising of four (4) revenue districts of GESCOM namely Ballari, Kalaburagi (Gulbarga), Raichur and Yadgir.** under Sections 14 and 15 of Electricity Act, 2003 ("the Act") read with Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, KERC (Licensing) Regulations, 2004 and other applicable Rules and Regulations. The Commission has directed Tata Power to publish a Public Notice under Section 15 (2) of the Act.
2. **The salient features of the Application are briefly provided below:**

Applicant's Name:	The Tata Power Company Limited
Address of Applicant's Registered Office:	Bombay House 24 Homi Mody Street Mumbai 400 001
Nature of license applied for:	Distribution License under 6th proviso of Section 14 of the Act
Applicant's principal place of business:	**Geographically connected areas comprising four (4) revenue districts of GESCOM namely Ballari, Kalaburagi (Gulbarga), Raichur and Yadgir**

3. **Other salient features of the Application:**
- The Tata Power Company Limited is catering to the power demand of the consumers across Mumbai, Ajmer, and in the states of Delhi and Odisha.
- Tata Power Distribution – Mumbai has a customer base of over 0.8 million consumers in Mumbai across an area of 485 Sq. kms, with a network length of 4850 CKM and more than 99.99% reliability, which is among the highest in the country.
- Tata Power has remarkable performance at Tata Power - DDL, Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), Tata Power Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL), Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL), Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL), Tata Power Ajmer Distribution Limited (TPADL).
- Tata Power has been engaged in the business of distribution of electricity for over a century and is thereby in possession of unrivalled expertise and capabilities to manage the increasingly complex electricity distribution business. The Petitioner intends to leverage multiple synergies and thus cater to the ever-increasing power demand of consumers in the proposed area of supply i.e. the geographically connected area comprising of **four (4) revenue districts of GESCOM namely Ballari, Kalaburagi (Gulbarga), Raichur and Yadgir.**
- The proposed area for which The Tata Power Company Limited is seeking Distribution License, presently falls within the distribution area of **Gulbarga Electricity Supply Company Limited (GESCOM).**

4. **Legal Status of the Applicant and Registration No.:**
Public Limited Company -CIN [L28920MH1919PLC000567]
5. **Shareholding Pattern:**

Sr. No.	Name of Shareholder	No. of shares held (31st March 2025)
(i)	Promoter & Promoter Group	1497257565
(ii)	Public	1698081982
(iii)	Non Promoter - Non Public	0
(iv)	Shares Underlying DRs	0
(v)	Shares Held By Employee Trust	0
(vi)	Total	3195339547

6. **Management Profile (Board of Directors):**

Sr. No.	Name and Designation	Qualification	Area of Expertise	Experience
1	Mr. Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Non-Independent, Non- Executive Director, Chairperson	• Masters in Computer Applications, Regional Engineering College, Trichy	• Chairman of Tata Sons	Over 36 years
		• Honorary 'Doctor of Letters', Regional Engineering College, Trichy	• Leadership in global business operations	
2	Dr. Praveer Sinha, Managing Director & CEO	• Ph.D. from Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi	• Power sector expert	Over 36 years
		• Master's in Business Law from National Law School, Bangalore	• Leadership in power generation and distribution	
		• Electrical Engineering degree from Delhi College of Engineering		
3	Ms. Anjali Bansal, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Computer Engineering	• Expertise in corporate governance	Over 20 years
		• Master's in International Finance and Business from Columbia University	• Experience in technology and financial services sectors	
4	Mr. Ashok Sinha, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from IIT Kanpur	• Extensive experience in the energy sector	Over 38 years
		• MBA from IIM Bangalore	• Former Chairman and Managing Director of BPCL	
5	Mr. Rajiv Mehrishi, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Master's in History	• Former Comptroller and Auditor General of India	Over 40 years in civil services
		• MBA from University of Strathclyde, UK	• Expertise in public administration and finance	
6	Ms. Vibha Padalkar, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Chartered Accountant	• Managing Director and CEO of HDFC Life Insurance Company	Over 30 years
			• Expertise in finance and insurance sectors	
7	Mr. Saurabh Agrawal, Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from IIT Roorkee	• Group Chief Financial Officer of Tata Sons	Over 25 years
		• PGDM from IIM Calcutta	• Expertise in corporate finance and strategy	
8	Mr. Sanjay V. Bhandarkar, Independent Non-Executive Director	• MBA from XLRI, Jamshedpur	• Former Managing Director of Rothschild India	Over 30 years
			• Experience in investment banking and corporate finance	
9	Mr. Tarun Bajaj, Independent Non-Executive Director	• Bachelor's in Commerce from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University	• Former Revenue Secretary, Government of India	Over 34 years in civil services
		• MBA from Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad	• Expertise in finance, taxation, and public administration	
		• M.Sc. from London School of Economics and Political Science		
10	Pramod Agarwal Independent Non-Executive Director	• B. Tech (Civil) - IIT Mumbai	• Former Chairman and Managing Director ('CMD') of Coal India Limited, Principal Secretary in Government of Madhya Pradesh	Over 30 + years in civil services
		• M. Tech (Design Engineering) IIT Delhi.	• Project management, • Strategic alliances • Tactical planning	

7. **Summary of activities and past experience in similar activities:**
In the electricity distribution sector, Tata Power is providing uninterrupted, affordable, and reliable power supply to consumers across Mumbai, Ajmer, and in the states of Delhi and Odisha.
I. **Distribution License in Mumbai:** The Hon'ble MERC granted a Distribution License to Tata Power (Distribution License No.1 of 2014) for a period of 25 years for Mumbai City, and part of Mumbai Suburban Area, (areas of Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation including area covered under Chene and Varsave). Tata Power Distribution – Mumbai has a customer base of over 0.8 million consumers in Mumbai across an area of 485 Sq. kms., with a network length of 4,850 CKM and peak demand of 1,076 MW, Tata Power Distribution-Mumbai operates a state-of-the-art electricity distribution network with distribution losses of around 1.24%.
II. **Distribution License in Delhi:** Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power – DDL) was incorporated in July 2002 as a Joint Venture of the Tata Power Company Limited (51%) and the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (49%) on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. Tata Power – DDL serves customer base of about 2.1 million, manages an electricity distribution network of about 12500 CKM. The AT&C loss levels have been reduced from 53.1% in 2002 to 5.54% in 2025.
III. **Distribution License in Central Odisha:** Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL) is a Joint Venture between Tata Power and the Government of Odisha with the majority stake being held by Tata Power Company (51%). TPCODL serves a customer base of 3.3 million over a vast distribution area of 29,354 sq. km. Starting from 30.49% at the time of acquisition in June 2020, the AT&C losses now stand at 19.6%. TPCODL manages an electricity distribution network of 114119 Ckt. Km.
IV. **Distribution License in Northern Odisha:** Tata Power Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL) was formed in April 2021 as a Joint Venture between Tata Power (51%) and GRIDCO Ltd (49%) to carry out the function of distribution and retail supply of electricity. TPNODL serves customer base of 2 million, spanning across an area of 27920 sq. kms. The AT&C losses for the year stood at 12.6 % at the end of FY 25 which is an achievement of 4.49 % less than the target of 17.09% assigned by the Hon'ble OERC. TPNODL operates 566 power transformers, 81168 distribution transformers and 164629 ckm of Network.
V. **Distribution License in Southern Odisha:** Tata Power Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) started its operations in January 2021. With a consumer base of about 2.2 million. TPSODL spans for around 48,751 Sq. kms. in the southern parts of Odisha. TPSODL manages and operates 112955 ckm of network. The peak demand recorded was 798 MVA.
VI. **Distribution License in Western Odisha:** Tata Power Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL) is a Joint Venture between Tata Power (51%) and GRIDCO Limited (49%) and started its operations in January 2021. TPWODL had a registered customer base of 2.2 million covering 48,373 sq. km. TPWODL manages and operates 692 power transformers, 82752 distribution transformers, 179694 Ckt. Km. of Network. The AT&C losses during FY 25 were 17.1%. Peak demand recorded was 1780 MW.
VII. **Distribution Franchisee in Ajmer:** Tata Power Ajmer Distribution Limited (TPADL) is a distribution franchisee having signed a Distribution Franchisee Agreement (DFA) with Ajmer Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited. TPADL is responsible for operating and maintaining the distribution network in Ajmer City and managing the billing and collection across an area of around 200 Sq. Kms. TPADL has contributed towards reduction of AT&C losses from 17.2% to 7.8%.

8. **Proposed area of supply, its description and number of consumers proposed to be served:** The Tata Power Company Limited seeks to undertake distribution and supply of power in the geographically connected area comprising **four (4) revenue districts of GESCOM namely Ballari, Kalaburagi (Gulbarga), Raichur and Yadgir.** The aforementioned areas cover either entirely or partially the area of **1. Ballari City Corporation 2. Kalaburagi City Corporation 3. Raichur City Corporation 4. Siraguppa City Municipal Council 5. Shahabad City Municipal Council 6. Sindhanur City Municipal Council 7. Shahapur City Municipal Council 8. Surapur City Municipal Council 9. Yadgir City Municipal Council**
TPC will serve more than 51,000 (Fifty-one Thousand) consumers by the end of 3 years from Grant of Licence.
9. **Contact details of the nodal person from whom copy of application may be obtained for inspection or purchase:**

(i)	Name and Designation of Person	Shri. Manish Dahake, Group Head - Network Planning & Consumer Engineering (City)
(ii)	Address of the office from where to obtain copy of application for inspection or purchase:	The Tata Power Company Limited, Distribution Division, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400 013, India.
(iii)	Detailed application documents along with CD (in English) (on payment of Rs. 150/- in cash or by DD/ Cheque drawn on [The Tata Power Company Limited] payable at Mumbai).	
(iv)	Detailed application documents (in English) (on payment of Rs. 100/-);	
(v)	CD of detailed application document (in English) (on payment of Rs. 50/-);	

10. **Website address from where the copy of application and other documents mentioned therein may be downloaded free of cost:** Website: **www.tatapower.com**
11. The Tata Power Company Limited hereby confirms and declares that the Applicant duly complies with the additional requirements laid down under Rule 3 of The Distribution of Electricity Licence (Additional Requirements of Capital Adequacy, Creditworthiness and Code of Conduct) Rules, 2005 (amended from time time) notified by the Central Government. TPC has filed Licence Application as detailed hereinabove and also enclosed all the compliance documents as part of the application.
12. In response to the Public Notice published, every person who intends to file suggestions/ objections can submit the same in English or Kannada language in writing to email id: asst.secykerc@gmail.com. In case of difficulty in accessing this feature, the concerned stakeholder can contact the KERC Office on Mobile No.: 8147 144 627 or on email id: asst.secykerc@gmail.com in between 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM on all the working days.
13. A Person who has submitted his / her suggestion / objection through email id mentioned above need not file any hard copy of its submission. Persons who do not have access to electronic media can file their suggestion/ objection in a hard copy addressed to The Secretary, Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission, Address: No 16C-1, Millers Road, Kaverappa Layout, Vasantha Nagar, Bengaluru Karnataka 560052. within thirty (30) days from the date of publication of this notice, along with proof of service on Mr. V. H. Wagle, Tata Power Company Limited [Tel: (91-22)-67172953 ,Email: vidyadhar.wagle@tatapower.com] and should carry the full name, postal address and E-mail address, if any, of the sender. Suggestions and/or objections received after **5 PM on 23rd June 2026** shall not be considered. Suggestions/Objections filed through any other mode shall not be considered.
14. TPC shall reply to each of the objections /comments received within three days of the receipt of the same but not later than **27th June 2026** for all the objections/comments received till **23rd June 2026.**

Sd/-
Vidyadhar Hari Wagle
Chief - Regulatory
The Tata Power Company Limited

Place: Mumbai
Date: 25th May, 2026

Cong rules out AIADMK entry into TN govt

New Delhi: Amid continuing controversy over the fate of the AIADMK rebel faction in Tamil Nadu and close numbers enjoyed by governing TVK coalition, Congress MP Manickam Tagore said AIADMK won't join the Vijay govt, and the mandate in the state is against any kind of "backdoor" politics of BJP, **reports Subodh Ghildiyal**.

Tagore, an early advocate of Cong flipping from DMK to TVK, told **TOI** numbers in the state are not too close to destabilise the govt. TNN

Infant deaths fall, but gap across states remains wide

Chhattisgarh Has IMR Of 36, In Kerala It's 8

Rema Nagarajan & Atul Thakur | TNN

New Delhi: India reduced Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), or the number of deaths per 1,000 live babies born, from 30 in 2019 to 24 in 2024. Chhattisgarh had the highest IMR of 36 followed by both Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh with 35. Kerala had the lowest IMR of 8, followed by Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Delhi, all recording 11.

This was revealed in the latest Sample Registration System report of 2024 which showed that rural IMR has decreased marginally more (by 36%), than urban IMR (by 35%). "Despite this decline, one in every 42 infants at the national level, one in every 37 infants in rural areas and one in every 59 infants in urban areas still die within one year of life," stated the report.

DECADAL DECLINE

Infant Mortality Rate
(Deaths Per 1,000 Births)

States/UT	2014	2024
TOP 5		
Kerala	12	8
Delhi	**20**	**11**
Himachal Pradesh	32	11
Tamil Nadu	20	11
Maharashtra	22	13
BOTTOM 5		
Rajasthan	46	28
Assam	49	29
Madhya Pradesh	52	35
Uttar Pradesh	48	35
Chhattisgarh	43	36

Sharp reduction in IMR is attributed to the jump in institutional deliveries. The report shows that the percent of live births where the mother received medical attention in a govt or private hospital jumped from below 83% in 2019 to over 95% in 2024. However, Chhattisgarh is proof that increasing institutional delivery alone will not be enough. Institutional delivery went from over 77% to 97% in Chhattisgarh in 2019-24.

Chhattisgarh had the lowest decline in IMR (from 45 to 37), a percentage change of just 18.3% between 2012-14 and 2022-24. The highest improvement was a decline of 62.7% in Jammu and Kashmir (from 37 to 14) in the same period. India decreased its IMR by 37.4% in this period, a higher percentage change than between 2002-04 and 2012-14, when it fell by 33.2% from 60.3 to 40.3.

Overall rural IMR has fallen more than urban with Assam showing the highest difference in IMR between rural (31) and urban areas (14). Many states also showed significant difference in the IMR between male and female infants. Among the bigger States, Bihar showed the highest gender gap in IMR. In Bihar, the IMR was 21 for males and 25 for females. In contrast, in Jammu & Kashmir, IMR was higher for males (16) than for female infants (12).

While IMR is about infant deaths before reaching the age of one, the bulk of these deaths happen within the first 28 days of birth. The number of newborn deaths during the first 28 days of life per 1,000 live births is called neo-natal mortality rate (NMR) and that constituted almost 73% of infant deaths, an increase from 67.6% in 2014. When overall survival of infants improves through interventions like immunisation, the risks they face in the first 28 days including prematurity, low birth weight, birth asphyxia and neonatal infections become the cause for a larger proportion of deaths. Targeted government initiatives that are more challenging to implement are needed to tackle these.

India's overall NMR was 18 deaths per 1,000 live births. Among the bigger States/ UTs, Kerala had the lowest Neo-Natal Mortality Rate of 6 deaths per 1,000 live births, while Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh had the highest rate of 26 deaths per 1,000 live births, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 25.

Ex-MP calls for quick Cong-SP talks in UP

Subodh.Ghildiyal@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: With political focus shifting to the battle for Uttar Pradesh, senior Congress member and former MP **P L Punia** wants the Congress to immediately start the seat-sharing talks with ally Samajwadi Party. He also wants the party to follow it up with selection of candidates without much delay.

Punia told **TOI**, "There is not much time left now for the assembly elections in UP. So, talks between Congress and SP over seat distribution must start soon, and should be clinched quickly." He also stressed that Congress should follow up the seat-sharing talks with "other steps for elections", like selection of candidates. "The candidate finalisation should also be done fast. That should be done," he said.

Punia denied any doubts about the tie-up between SP and Congress, even rubbishing the speculations in the wake of the unannounced visit of AICC SC department chairman Rajendra Pal Gautam and MP Tanuj Punia to BSP chief Mayawati's residence. While the two could not meet Mayawati, it led to a chatter that the visit was part of Congress's pressure tactics with SP. Punia said it was just an impromptu decision of Gautam to meet a community leader, and no political meaning should be read into it. Punia said there is complete coordination between Congress and SP. "We have a partnership and there are no pressure tactics at play," he added.

The former MP said that opposition is strongly placed in UP and the BJP would not be able to reverse the tide.

Goyal: Rahul's 'govt will fall' remark hints at conspiracy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP functionaries and Union ministers said Sunday that Rahul Gandhi's reported comment at a Congress event that govt will fall within a year is a no ordinary statement but a pointer to the conspiracy to stoke anarchy and destabilise the country.

Several BJP functionaries launched a coordinated attack on the Congress MP, with Union minister **Piyush Goyal** saying Rahul and his associates have realised that they cannot defeat BJP in a democratic contest and so they now want to spread violence in the country. Their hatred against India runs so deep that they simply cannot bear to witness anything positive happening in the country, he alleged.

"People of this country are discerning. They fully understand the true nature of Rahul Gandhi, the opposition, and the toolkit gang that is working against the national interest," Goyal added.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

E- Tender
Tender Notice No. NER_SnT_Proj_BSB_03_2026

Dy.Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/ Project/ N.E. Railway/ Varanasi for and on behalf of President of India invites through E-Tender (Two Packet System) for the following works from the contractors having sufficient experience as per eligibility criteria mentioned in tender document: - **Tender Notice No. & Description of work :** NER_SnT_Proj_BSB_03_2026 NAME OF WORK: - Survey, Design, Supply, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of Automatic Block Signalling Work utilizing MSDAC for continuous track circuiting including associated auxiliary works at adjoining stations along with 4x48 OFC work in the Aurihar Jn. (ARJ) - Chhapra Jn. (CPR) section in the Varanasi Division of N.E. Railway. Approx. Value : Rs. 1361067788.19, Bid Security : Rs. 27221400.00, Completion time/period from the date of issue of acceptance letter: 18 Months., Date &Time of Closing 07.07.2026 15.00 hrs. **NOTE:-** 1. Validity of Offer should be 90 days from date of closing of tender. 2. Detailed tender notice, Eligibility criteria, terms & conditions are available at website http://www.ireps.gov.in, 3. The Bid Security shall be deposited either in cash through e-payment gateway or submitted as Bank Guarantee bond from a scheduled commercial bank of India or as mentioned in tender documents. The Bank Guarantee bond shall be as per Annexure-1.1 (Tender document) and shall be valid for a period of 90 days beyond the expiry of bid validity period.

Dy.CSTE/Project, Varanasi/
CPRO/Sig.-43 **North Eastern Railway**
"Never travel on roof and foot boards"

25001/246/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, CUTTACK

e-mail: serw_ctc@yahoo.com

No. Tender Online RWC - 06/26 Letter No.- 2311 Date : 18.05.2026

e-Procurement NOTICE

1. **Name of the work** : Construction of **Road & Bridge** works.
2. **Class of contractor**
c) Estimated cost more than Rs.6.00 Crore & upto Rs.50.00 Crore : Special Class (of Odisha PWD) & relevant class of other licensing authorities.
d) Estimated cost more than Rs.1.00 Crore & upto Rs.20.00 Crore : A Class (of Odisha PWD) & relevant class of other licensing authorities.
e) Estimated cost more than Rs. 20.00 Lakh & upto Rs.3.00 Crore : B Class (of Odisha PWD) & relevant class of other licensing authorities.
3. **Time for Completion** : As specified in the **Column-7 of the Annexure.**
4. **Detail Projects** : **As per Annexure attached**
5. **Other Details**

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding From	To	Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Cuttack	Tender Online RWC - 06/26	30.05.2026 at 11.30 A.M.	19.06.2026 upto 05.00 P.M.	19.06.2026 upto 02.00 P.M.	20.06.2026 at 11.30 A.M.	Will be intimated later

Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in.**

Sd/- **Chief Construction Engineer Rural Works Circle, Cuttack**

OIPR-25001/25097/1/26-27/0003

25001/238/2627

ମୁଖ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ
ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ମଣ୍ଡଳ, ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁର
(ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ / ଜୋନ୍- ଅମ୍ବାପୁଆ, ଆୟକର ଭବନ ନିକଟରେ, ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁର - ୭୬୦୦୧୧, ଗଞ୍ଜାମ, ଓଡିଶା)

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR
(At/Po- Ambapua, Near Income Tax Office, Berhampur-760011, Ganjam, Odisha)
(E-Mail : serwbpr2004@yahoo.com, Tel No. : 0680-2404287)

E-Mail / E-Despatch

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Bid Identification No. Online Tender /07-2026-27/BPR

Identification No	Name of work	No. of Works	Approx. Estimated Cost (in lakh)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion
Online Tender / 07-2026-27/ BPR	Road Works under MMSY-Improvement to Existing RD roads & Mukya Mantri Sadak Yojana (MMSY)	11 Nos	From Rs. 234.49 Lakhs to Rs. 699.02 Lakhs	"B" Class or "A" Class or "Special" Class as applicable	Period of Completion as provided as per Col. No. 5 of Annexure of NIT

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No	Availability of tender online for bidding From	To
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W. Circle, Berhampur	Online Tender/07-2026-27/BPR	30.05.2026 at 10.00 A.M.	16.06.2026 upto 5.30 P.M.

(i) **EMD/Bid Security, Cost of Bid document is to be transferred through Online as per the procedure mentioned in the DTCN.**
(ii) **Non-submission of the information/documents through online by the bidder as per the items mentioned in the eligible criteria of the DTCN will also liable for rejection of his tender.**
Further details & Corrigendum if any can be seen from the website : www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Sd/-
Chief Engineer
R.W. Circle, Berhampur
OIPR-25001/25071/1/26-27/0010

25001/244/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE : SUNDARGARH
AT/PO - SANKARA, SUNDARGARH-770020, E-mail address - serw_sundargarh@yahoo.com
No. Tender Online - RWCCESNG - 07 of 2026-27, Letter No. 2889 / Dtd. 19.05.2026

e-Procurement NOTICE

1. Type of the Work : Roads (MMSY)
2. Class of Contractor : As specified in the column-6 of the Annexure
3. Time of Completion : As specified in the column-5 of the Annexure
4. Detail Projects : As per Annexure attached
5. Estimated Cost : As specified in the column-4 of the Annexure
6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding From	To	Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh	RWCCESNG-07 of 2026-27	29.05.2026 11:00 AM	18.06.2026 5:00 PM	17.06.2026 5:00 PM	19.06.2026 11:00 AM	Will be intimated separately

Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh

OIPR-25001/25133/1/26-27/0009

25001/225/2627

E.Mail - serwcirclesbp@yahoo.com

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SAMBALPUR

E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE

BID IDENTIFICATION NO. BRIDGE TENDER ONLINE RWCSBP-06 / 2026-27

1. Name of the Work : Bridge Works
2. Total No. of works : 11 nos Bridge work
3. Estimated cost : Rs. 305.35 lakhs to Rs. 954.54 lakhs
4. Class of contractor : 'A' Class
5. Other details : As mentioned in DTCN

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding From	To
1	2	3	4
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur.	BRIDGE TENDER ONLINE RWCSBP-06/2026-27	28.05.2026 11.00 A.M.	16.06.2026 05.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur
OIPR-25001/25091/1/26-27/0009

25001/240/2627

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BHAWANIPATNA
Bid identification No.: BPT/Online-03/2026-27 Date-15.05.2026
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR ROAD WORKS IN ODISHA
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

1. Name of the Work : Construction of Road works under MMSY Schemes in the District of Nuapada.
2. No of Works : As per NIT.
3. Location details : Nuapada District
4. Estimated Cost : As per NIT.
5. Period of Completion : As per NIT.
6. Cost of tender paper : Rs.10,000/- per set.
7. Other details :

Availability of tender for online bidding From	To	Last date & time for seeking tender clarification	Date and time of opening of technical bid
28.05.2026 11.00 A.M.	11.06.2026 5.00 P.M.	10.06.2026	12.06.2026 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website **"www.tendersorissa.gov.in"**

Sd/- **Chief Construction Engineer Rural Works Circle, Bhawanipatna**

OIPR-25001/25102/1/26-27/0003

TAMILNADU MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Tamilnadu Undertaking)
No. 417, Pantheon Road, Egmore, Chennai - 600008.
Phone: 044-2819 1890, 2819 0259 Website: www.tnmsc.tn.gov.in
E-Mail: gmdrug.tnmsc@tn.gov.in, mngrpurdrug.tnmsc@tn.gov.in

Online Tender is invited by the Tender Inviting Authority, Tamilnadu Medical Services Corporation Ltd., Chennai – 600008, from Licensed **Albendazole Tablets IP - 400mg** Manufacturers having three years Market Standing and holding Good Manufacturing Practice Certificate (as per latest revised Schedule "M" of D&C Act, 1940) issued by the Drugs Control Authority. Direct Importers holding a valid Import License and experienced for a minimum period of three years and Loan Licensees having valid Loan License are also eligible to participate in this tender.

Sl. No	Description	e-Tender Reference	Tender Floating Period	e-Tender Submission Duration	Date and time of online opening of Technical Bids
1	Online Tender for the supply of **Albendazole Tablets IP - 400mg** to TNMSC Limited under rate contract system for one year from the date of acceptance	e-014/M(P)/ ALBEN/ TNMSC/2026, Dated. 26.05.2026	**26.05.2026 at 4.00 PM to 04.06.2026 upto 3.00 PM**	**29.05.2026 at 10.00 AM to 04.06.2026 upto 3.00 PM**	**04.06.2026 at 4.00 PM**

The tender document can be downloaded and the tender shall be submitted at **https://tntenders.gov.in/.** The tender document can also be downloaded at **www.tnmsc.tn.gov.in** for reference purpose.

DIPR / 1937 / Tender / 2026

Tender Inviting Authority / General Manager (Drugs)

32001/274/2627

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
POTTERU IRRIGATION PROJECT, BALIMELA
e-mail Id : ccepotteru123@gmail.com
e-Procurement Notice No.- CCE-PIP-BML-03/2026-27

1. Type of Works : System Improvement works.
2. Total No. of Works : Two (2) Nos.
3. Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs. 189.08 Lakh to Rs. 205.88 Lakh
4. Period of Completion : Eight (8) Calendar Months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Bid Amount (Rs. In Lakhs)	Availability & Submission of Bids- on line.
Chief Construction Engineer, Potteru Irrigation Project, Balimela, Malkangiri	CCE-PIP-BML-03(1)/2026-27 to CCE-PIP-BML-03(2)/2026-27	Varies from Rs. 189.08 Lakh to Rs. 205.88 Lakh	From 30.05.2026 10.00 A.M. to 09.06.2026 5.00 P.M.

Date of opening of the Tender / Bid: - 10.06.2026 at 11.00 A.M
Further details can be seen from the Govt. Website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Potteru Irrigation Project, Balimela
OIPR-32001/32052/1/26-27/0005

Pairing financial push with infrastructure reform for brain drain reversal

Allowing Indian talent overseas to only fuel the bottle, ensuring their engagement after the PhD's need period through visible funding platforms support will be critical

Rural AI push gathers pace, but fragmented efforts risk limiting impact

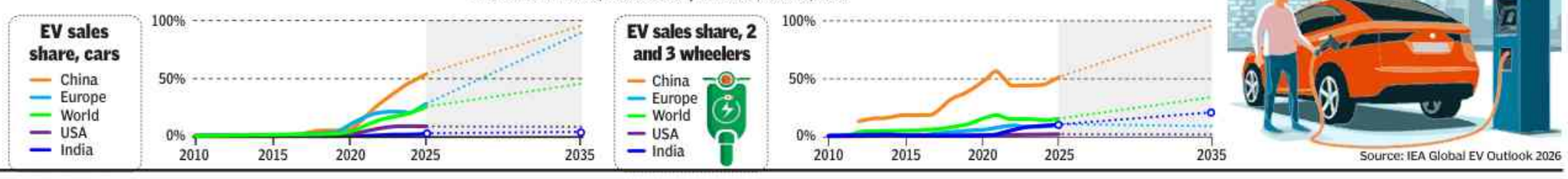
Aspirants pivot to private varsities due to gap between CLAT results and counselling

CoE support helps Eklavya School students shine in JEE, NEET

TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | MONDAY, MAY 25, 2026

From just 2% in 2018, EVs now account for about a quarter of global car sales, driven largely by China, which remains world's dominant EV market. India emerged as the 2nd-largest market for e-2Ws and the 3rd-largest for e-buses by sales volume



Source: IEA Global EV Outlook 2026

What is a claim? IRDAI seeks industry's standard definition

Necessary To Determine Claims Ratio, Underwriting Profits

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Mumbai: IRDAI has asked the non-life industry to come up with a standard definition of claim and a uniform definition of claim settlement ratio for various lines of business. This followed different companies using different definitions for determining claim settlement ratio, a key metric that is an indicator of companies' financial health and customer satisfaction.

Some companies register a claim at the first instance while others do so after establishing liability under a policy. While for the layman a 'settled claim' is one where the insurance company has paid to their satisfaction, some insurance companies treat claims closed by them for non-availability of documents or claims rejected for not coming within the scope of the policy as settled claims. While this helps the numbers add up, it gives a uneven picture of how many customers are getting what they claimed.

"The general insurance council has submitted their views on standard definition of claim and uniform approach to define claim settlement ratio for various lines of business to IRDAI as required by them. This is to ensure that a clear picture emerges in regard to a company's claim settlement standards without variation in different approaches by each company at various steps," said an industry source.

FIXING CLAIM RATIO GAPS

- Divergent definitions of claim settlement (rejection for out-of-policy scope reasons, closures over non-availability of documents) skew settlement ratios
- True settlement should reflect customer acceptance; disputes keep claims "unsettled"
- With a uniform, broad definition of claim in place, insurance cos might have to set aside funds for every demand, even when they don't have active cover
- Standard norms aim to improve transparency on claim payouts and customer satisfaction

"In simple reality a claim can be treated as settled only if the client confirms that it is settled. Till that is done, the claim remains pending / disputed " said KK Srinivasan, former member non-life at IRDAI. He added that if a claim is repudiated by an insurance company, it can be disputed legally within 3 years of repudiation and will remain disputed till the court disposes it off. "Once a court admits the repudiation or dispute for hearing, it has to be treated as unsettled till the court or forum disposes it off and the order of the court is complied with," he added.

While companies ask claimants to give a discharge voucher saying they accept the full and final settlement, there are many claims where the customer is not satisfied. The definition of a claim is essential to determining the incurred claims ratio which determines underwriting profits. A broad definition of a claim would mean that insurers would have to set aside funds for every demand made from them even when they do not have active cover.

"The claim settlement ratio has to be seen over a period of time. It is possible for a company to have a claim settlement ratio of over 100 if it settles all claims and the claims pending from the previous year," said the former CEO of a non-life company.

Startups go slow on D-St debut as conflict roils investor appetite

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Mumbai: After a bull run in the IPO market over the past two years, Indian startups are finding it hard to take the road to Dalal Street. The US-Iran war has thrown a spanner in their IPO plans with many companies delaying listing timelines and going slow on filing draft papers.

PhonePe has pressed pause on its $1.3 billion IPO initially slated for a launch sometime in April and Flipkart too is understood to be in no rush to go ahead with IPO preparations amid wobbly markets.

Even as a few big issues by firms such as Zepto and Oyo are in the pipeline, those are unlikely to hit the bourses if markets remain volatile, impacting the broader IPO fundraising, industry executives said. "Only six new age companies got listed so far this year, of which four got listed below the issue price. The returns they generated for investors have been lower compared to gains investors made through tech IPOs last year," said Sneha Poddar of Motilal Oswal Financial Services. Amid tough market conditions, markets regulator Sebi extended the validity of IPO approvals by six months till Sept this year. Merchant bankers expect this to get extended by another six months.

DWINDLING IPOS

Month	2025 No. of issues	2025 Issue Amount (Rs.crore)	2026 No. of issues	2026 Issue Amount (Rs.crore)
Jan	6	4,845	3	4,765
Feb	3	10,878	7	8,162
March	0	0	8	5,852
April	1	2,981	2	1,076
May	6	8,983	0	0

Source: primedatabase.com

Overall, there have been only about 20 mainboard IPOs so far this year, with companies raising under Rs 20,000 crore in the first five months of the year against over Rs 27,000 crore in each of the past two years. Also, the issue sizes this year haven't been very large, a sharp contrast over last year, Poddar said, adding that big companies targeting high valuations and large listings will not launch IPOs unless there is investor appetite for big issues. Shares of new age firms Amagi Media Labs, Shadowfax and Fractal Analytics got listed below their IPO issues prices on the bourses this year while Aye Finance had a flat listing.

"Investors have become more selective and value-sensitive. As a result, some startups are reassessing timelines, refining narratives and waiting for greater visibility before entering the public markets," said Raghav Gupta, joint CEO at IIFL Capital

"One can expect firms who may have thought of listing in the next immediate few months might push it out by a quarter," Jang Bahadur Singh, of Aon told **TOI.**

(With inputs from Aditi Bhardwaj)

InGovern calls for Tata Sons listing

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: A proxy advisory firm is pressing India's central bank to require Tata Sons to go public, arguing that its size and systemic importance demand disclosure standards closer to those applied to major financial institutions rather than those typical of private holding companies.

InGovern, in a report titled "Tata Sons: The Listing Imperative," said that where control is exercised through a complex trust-based holding structure, the case for listing is stronger, as governance should not rest on private consensus alone. The firm brushed aside arguments that a listing would erode Tata Sons' ability to take a long-term view or prop up struggling group companies, saying India's market history offers no evidence that going public would "break" the conglomerate's storied stewardship model.

The report comes amid an ongoing debate over the future of one of India's most prominent corporate holding structures. N A Soonawala, a former vice chairman of Tata Sons, had argued against listing, saying the existing ownership model has enabled long-term investment and support for weaker affiliates without the pressure of public markets.

RBI has placed Tata Sons within the upper layer of its core investment company (CIC) framework, signalling enhanced oversight, while its application for deregistration remains pending. The regulator has, in various communications, indicated that large CICs should be listed.

InGovern also rejected concerns around a so-called holding-company discount as a reason to avoid listing, arguing that "regulators are not meant to preserve private valuation convenience; they are meant to ensure fair disclosure and orderly markets," and that valuation discounts are a market outcome, not a regulatory justification for continued opacity.

Concerns that greater transparency would expose weakness in subsidiaries are overstated, the report added, noting that consolidated and subsidiary-level financial information is already embedded in Tata Sons' reporting architecture.

Why Fund Managers Hold Cash In Mutual Fund Schemes

TOI IN THE CLASSROOM

Investors often notice varying levels of cash across equity mutual fund schemes, reflecting different strategies adopted by fund houses. A look at why fund managers hold cash in their portfolios and the impact it has

Invesco Mutual Fund

An investor education and awareness initiative

For Know Your Customer (KYC) guidelines along with the documentary requirements and procedure for change of address, phone number, bank details, etc., please visit the Education and Guidance section on www.invescomutualfund.com. Investor should deal with only SEBI registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified under "Intermediaries/Market Infrastructure Institutions" on https://www.sebi.gov.in/index.html. For any grievance / complaint, please call us on 1800-209-0007 or write to us at mfservices@invescoindia.com. Alternatively, complaints can be registered on the SEBI SCORES Portal at https://scores.sebi.gov.in

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

What Is Cash Holding In An Equity Scheme?

In an equity mutual fund, cash holdings refer to the portion of assets under management (AUM) held in cash, bank deposits, or highly liquid short-term instruments such as treasury bills and overnight money. This is the part of the corpus not deployed in equities or longer-term investments.

Why Do Equity MF Schemes Hold Cash?

Fund managers may build cash when they believe markets or specific sectors are overvalued and when they struggle to find quality stocks at reasonable valuations. Instead of investing at elevated prices, they allow cash to accumulate, creating a reserve to deploy during market corrections. Since cash carries minimal volatility and earns modest returns, a fund with, say, 10% cash will typically fall less than a fully invested peer during market declines, providing a buffer for investors

Open-ended mutual funds also need to meet daily redemption requests. To manage this, they maintain a baseline cash level, typically 1–5% of the scheme's AUM, to avoid selling core holdings at unfavourable prices. Funds investing in less liquid segments, such as small caps, may hold higher cash buffers. In periods of stress, liquidating such stocks can lead to significant impact costs; holding cash helps mitigate this risk.

What Does High Cash Holding Indicate?

A high cash level, typically above 8–10% in an equity fund, signals a deliberate tactical stance by the fund manager. While most Indian fund managers remain largely invested, those who take cash calls use them to reflect caution. A sustained build-up in cash may indicate the manager believes market valuations are stretched or not aligned with fundamentals, or that suitable investment opportunities are limited. Rather than compromising on quality, the manager chooses to wait for better entry points.

Why Do Many Managers Avoid High Holdings?

While higher cash levels can provide downside protection, they also carry the risk of underperformance. If markets continue to rally despite the manager's caution, the cash portion will generate significantly lower returns than equities. This can result in underperformance versus benchmark indices.

— PRASHANT MAHESH

Gold likely to remain range-bound: Analysts

New Delhi: Gold prices are likely to remain range-bound in this week as traders await more clarity on the evolving US-Iran negotiations, while silver is expected to retain a positive bias amid geopolitical uncertainty and elevated energy rates, analysts said. Investors will also track US housing data, GDP numbers.Gold futures rose marginally to close the previous week at Rs 1.58 lakh per 10 grams, on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). AGENCIES

Foreign travel spends fall to $1.1bn in March

Mumbai: Overseas travel spending by Indians, including holiday trips, declined by $212.4 million to $1.1 billion in March compared to Feb, according to outward remittances data from RBI. The outward remittances for travel were at $1.3 billion in Feb and USD 1.7 billion in Jan this year. AGENCIES

ICAI to set up forensic auditing lab in Hyd

New Delhi: Chartered accountants' institute ICAI will be setting up an advanced "pay and use" forensic auditing lab in Hyderabad to help small and medium practitioners, its President Prasanna Kumar D said. ICAI has more than five lakh members, including small and medium practitioners. AGENCIES

Govt pushes depts for PSU closure after poor progress

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New Delhi: Years after the Modi govt cleared the closure of 40-odd unviable public sector companies, just one has "shut down", prompting govt to push ministries to move ahead instead of sitting on the plans.

So far, just Rajasthan Drugs and Pharmaceuticals has "shut down", by virtue of the state govt agreeing to take it over. "The ministries concerned and the department of public enterprises have been asked to move ahead with the closure of these PSUS," an official privy to the discussions told **TOI**.

The move follows a recent review of the status of PSU sale and closure after the fiasco with IDBI Bank, where govt abandoned the process after five years as the two bids were below reserve price.

While there is a clear-cut roadmap on how to close down the unviable and loss-making PSUS, which have little relevance today, ministries have not moved. In June 2018 itself, the Union cabinet had cleared the guidelines. "The guidelines give first priority for utilisation of land of CPSEs under closure for affordable housing as per the relevant guidelines of ministry of housing and urban affairs (MoHUA). Since there are employees working in these CPSEs, govt decided that closure should not cause hardship to them and has now laid down a uniform policy to give workers VRS at 2007 notional pay scale, irrespective of the pay scale in which they are working," an official statement issued eight years ago had said.

COS ON CLOSURE LIST

- Bharat Immunologicals & Biologicals
- Bharat Pumps & Compressors
- Birds Jute & Exports
- HHEC
- Hindustan Cables
- Hindustan Flurocarbons
- HMT Watches
- IDPL
- Scooters India
- STCL

Source: DPE

But, the bureaucracy clearly has not moved on it. So, there are instances of land not being transferred or employee dues not being settled for years, despite a clear intent from govt as the cabinet had also endorsed the plan. "It's time ministries moved instead of letting govt bleed," said a senior official.

The Public Enterprises Survey, brought out by the department of public enterprises, said at the end of 2024-25, the last report period, of the 475 central PSUs, 75 were on the list for closure, liquidation, or were non-operating, compared with 72 in the previous year and 26 in 2020-21. It said govt has approved two dozen for closure.

Mkts to take cue from US-Iran negotiations, oil prices: Analysts

New Delhi: Developments related to negotiations between the US and Iran to resolve the West Asia conflict, oil prices and foreign investors' trading activity will largely influence stock markets in a holiday-shortened week, analysts said. Equity markets would remain closed on Thursday for Bakri Id.

The rupee-dollar trend and global market sentiment would also be tracked by investors, according to the analysts.

"This week is expected to remain highly sensitive to global macroeconomic developments and currency movements. Investors will also monitor crude oil prices, developments in US-Iran negotiations, and the trajectory of the US dollar and bond yields, all of which are expected to influence foreign flows and overall risk appetite," Ajit Mishra, SVP, research, Religare Broking, said.

Participants will closely assess the impact of the RBI's record dividend transfer on liquidity expectations, fiscal flexibility, and government spending prospects going forward, Mishra added. "Markets are expected to remain volatile and heavily headline-driven in the coming week, with investor attention firmly focused on developments surrounding the US-Iran situation, broader diplomatic negotiations and movements in crude oil prices. While hopes of a diplomatic breakthrough and easing geopolitical tensions have improved sentiment modestly, investors continue to remain cautious as uncertainty surrounding the final outcome of the negotiations remains elevated," Ponmudi R, CEO, Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

"With global uncertainty still elevated, market participants are likely to remain selective and cautious despite the recent improvement in sentiment," Ponmudi added. Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Investments, said, a more constructive market setup would require crude to ease more meaningfully, FII flows to stabilise, and Q1FY27 earnings expectations to be managed without significant downgrades. AGENCIES

Pronto stays silent on sale of datasets

▶ Continued from page 1

Pronto recently raised fresh capital from him and others, doubling to a valuation of $200 million in just a few months.

Anjali Sardana said videos are anonymised, no audio is recorded, and footage is deleted within 48 hours. But the company confirmed that "derived datasets" from those recordings are retained, including "key point mapping" data tracking body joints and hand movements.

When asked if those datasets could eventually be monetised or shared with third-party AI or robotics firms, Pronto declined to comment. Customers who opt for it pay an extra Rs 29 per booking; workers are paid extra as well.

Pronto's clarifications have done little to calm the backlash. On X, a post declaring "recording inside your house to train AI! This is scary" drew thousands of views and interactions. "Trust is the cornerstone of any consumer/service business and Pronto just lost it," wrote another user. Others raised a more practical concern, that homes are nearly impossible to truly anonymise. "Think name plates, ID cards, credit cards, bills," a frequent home-services app user told TOI.

Rival platforms moved quickly to distance themselves. "We are in the business of trust, and we take customer privacy extremely seriously. We do not engage in any such activities, have never done so, and have no plans to do so," Urban Company cofounder Abhiraj Bhal told TOI. Snabbit founder Ayush Agarwal said his company is not undertaking any such activity either.

Behind the debate is a rapidly emerging market for "egocentric," or first-person, data used to train physical AI systems. Unlike chatbots trained on text, physical AI needs exposure to real-world environments such as kitchens, utensils, shelves, clutter and repetitive human movement. Some AI labs globally pay between $4 and $10 an hour for such data, according to a founder building in the space.

The legal picture remains murky. Nikhil Narendra, a partner at law firm Trilegal said anonymised household data could potentially fall outside India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act, while cautioning that India still lacks a governance framework for non-personal data. For now, the front door remains the last line of privacy. The debate is about how long that holds.

EMS firms' expenses rise on working cap needs, inflation

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Chennai: Electronics manufacturing services (EMS) companies saw a sharp increase in costs during Q4FY26, as raw material cost inflation, extended working capital cycles, wage hikes and rupee depreciation squeezed margins. Prices of memory modules surged on the back of global AI-driven demand, while the West Asia conflict pushed up cost of key inputs such as copper laminates and increased logistics expenses. Higher inventory levels and the sector's heavy reliance on imported components further intensified cost pressures.

Two of the sector's largest players, Dixon Technologies and Kaynes Technology, saw profits decline despite strong revenue growth. Mobile-heavy Dixon Technologies Q4 profit after tax fell 36% on a yearly basis, hit by softer demand, inventory rationalisation by customers, memory price inflation and geopolitical disruption. The company's margins are expected to be under pressure in FY27 as mobile PLI, which contributed Rs 250 crore in FY26, expired.

Kaynes' Q4 PAT fell 21% from geopolitical risks, leading to customer deferrals and a 90% order drop from a major EV two-wheeler customer, where it was the sole supplier.

War hits medical tourism, operating costs may surge

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Chennai: Travel disruptions due to West Asia conflict continue to weigh on India's medical tourism sector, with overseas patient inflows yet to return to earlier levels. The region accounts for a substantial share of overseas patients visiting India's nearly $9-billion medical tourism market.

Although hospital operators have begun to see early signs of improvement from the region, international patient arrivals remain below the levels recorded before the conflict escalated earlier this year. Meanwhile, healthcare companies have cautioned that the prolonged geopolitical turmoil could also lead to higher operating costs, adding further pressure on the sector.

PATIENT ARRIVALS

- Iraq, Oman, Yemen, the UAE, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan and a few African countries including Sudan, Nigeria, and Ethiopia are among the top overseas sources for India's medical tourism market
- The market is estimated at about **$8.7 bn in 2025**, with projections of **$16.2 bn by 2030**

For instance, West Asia accounts for the largest share (30%) of Fortis Healthcare's international business. "During the first two–three days after the war began, the impact was not immediately evident, as many patients had already travelled to India. However, new patient arrivals dropped sharply in March before slowly recovering in April and May," group COO Anil Vinayak said.

The healthcare company observes that the ongoing crisis had a visible impact on international patient movement, particularly from key markets in the Gulf and neighbouring regions. "Since the conflict escalated at the end of Feb 2026, there has been a slowdown in patient inquiries, and actual arrivals owing to flight disruptions, visa/travel uncertainty, and safety concerns. International footfall across cities saw a decline of around 30% during the initial period, with patient movement from West Asia specifically dropping sharply in early March," he added.

HealthCare Global Enterprises (HCG) has seen a decline of 60–70% in patient volumes from countries in West Asia (between March and May 2026 compared with the same period last year). "International patient arrivals have started improving from April onwards. However, they are yet to return to pre-Feb 2026 levels," its AVP & group head international business, Vinayak Nayak said.

Another healthcare major Max Healthcare said it witnessed a decline in patient arrivals from several West Asian countries, especially Iraq, Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Queried about the impact of the West Asia crisis, Madhu Sasidhar, president & CEO, Apollo Hospitals said, "We have not seen a material decrease in patients coming to us from Middle East countries. On the other hand, I think the bigger impact is going to be on the cost side, both inflationary as well as currency related."

CONTRAPUNTO

Someone, somewhere, is playing the violin
in the background of violence
— SARA ABOU RASHED, poem

What Twisha Told Us

Why do parents tell daughters to adjust to dowry demands or cruelty?

Three cases, last week, burst the bubble, yet again, for many who assumed India's getting ahead of its most regressive practice – dowry. How wrong were they! Supreme Court will hear today, suo motu, Twisha Sharma's case, the young woman, whose 'death' in MP is less marked by grief, and more by murky allegations and slander exchanged between Twisha's marital and parental families.

The other two cases, in UP and MP again, and the approx 16 daily dowry deaths in India, speak just one truth. That women's security, or empowerment, is not a sum of parts, which are markers of progress or modernity. Their education/professional achievements, financial security or prosperity, social profile, access to healthcare, awareness of rights, none of this helped in the face of dowry demands, harassment, micro-aggressions, mental and physical torture, murder. Women risk all of this as part of the marriage pact between two families, tragically, even in 'love' marriages. No role, perhaps, bears as much burden as the young 'bahu', trained and conditioned from childhood, dangerously, to 'adjust'. It's what endangers their lives.

What are parents thinking when they turn away when a daughter communicates fear for her life? Indians, and govts, gloat about girls' achievements of schooling, college enrolment. Women's safety is such a talking point today. But what about when that 'safety' is missing within the family? Who is turning away when the married woman in her 20s-40s, seeks help? Dowry is near normalised, despite being illegal for decades, especially in northern states – UP, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, MP, but growing across India.

Studies of modern dowry practices, from researchers in BHU and Azim Premji Univ, for example, show dowry deaths are underreported, that dowry harassment and cruelty come to light often *after* the woman's death – the victim reduced to a tool of extraction/transaction between two families. Incidence of dowry harassment (1.2L per NCRB 2024) and reporting is up, showing law's being used. But anti-dowry legislation is only as good as its implementation. 87% of cases end in chargesheets. Courts are sitting on 90% pendency. Acquittals in dowry deaths, over 50%, outnumber convictions. Sector experts say 'suicide' is becoming what 'bride-burning' was in 1980s-1990s; abetment is notorious to prove. Another chilling stat – 47% of all convictions in 'crimes against women' were of those accused of dowry harassment. In-family cruelty is real. Financial coercion knows no economic strata. Dowry remains the single biggest source of harm to women's lives. Why can't bahus who feel threatened walk out from a dangerous marital home? That's a question for brides' parents. And cops. And govts.

National Embarrassment

WFI's more interested in vendetta than sport, so Vinesh Phogat has to keep fighting off the mat

Ideally, each of India's 60-odd sport federations should be a genuine custodian of its respective sport. But if this was so, so many athletes wouldn't be knocking on courts' doors, against their federations. On Friday, Delhi HC ruled that Vinesh Phogat's challenge to WFI, to be allowed to compete in the Asian Games 2026 selection trials, was "in the interest of sport and justice". What's troubling is, why would a sport federation serve any other interest?

Vinesh's case is both unique and representative. She's the first Indian woman wrestler to win an Asian Games gold, she's also got three Commonwealth Games golds, and she's competed in three Olympics. But her most gruelling contest has been off the mat. When she joined the 2023 wrestlers' protest, accusing Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh of sexual harassment, he was a BJP MP, a powerful federation chief, and running WFI out of his home. While that case is still in court, his parliamentary seat has passed to his son, the federation's now headed by his close associate, and, after a brief parting, the WFI office has reportedly returned to his home.

So, Vinesh's fight biography is singular, but her subjugation isn't. The "mala fide" vindictiveness Delhi HC found in WFI's actions against her, can't be separated from her complaint of sexual harassment. The show-cause notice that weaponised her motherhood against her also fits a familiar pattern – federations hiding arbitrary decisions behind opaque criteria. But the most nakedly mala fide detail was this: WFI described her Paris disqualification as a "national embarrassment". This was the first Indian woman wrestler to fight her way to an Olympic final, where she was gut-wrenchingly found 100g over the weight limit. While the international wrestling community rallied around her, her own federation's chosen to vilify her. This single act reveals everything about WFI's motivations. And until such petty, vindictive cliquedoms run Indian sport, excellence will remain out of reach.

Fatal Dose: Paneer Edition

An FIR filed in good taste and appetite

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Police Station: Bengaluru (Darshini division), Complaint No: 99/VARIETIES/DROHA, Section: 109 of BNS (Attempt to murder), Complainant/s: People of Bengaluru.

Victim: *Dose* (pronounced Doh-say), alias Dosa, as people outside the victim's immediate circle know the victim as.

Identity: Crisp, fermented, complete; last seen in sound condition at Darshini eatery, exact location known to every auto driver in the city.

Accused: Persons unknown, operating under the banner of "Innovation".

Statement of Complaint: That on a date which cannot be pinpointed precisely, because the crime was not committed at once but accumulated slowly, methodically, and with alarming enthusiasm, the accused did wilfully, deliberately, and with apparent good cheer, cause grievous harm to *Dose*.

That *Dose*, a long-standing resident of this city's breakfast hours, had an unblemished record. It had never been late, or complicated. It had asked only for a hot tawa, a good batter, and to be left alone with its chutney and sambar.

Complainants testify that this arrangement worked, very, very well. Yet, the accused proceeded with a redesign. With confidence. And menus.

List of Offences, in approx chronological order: The accused first introduced the concept of varieties – 99 of them, displayed on boards large enough to require municipal approval. They then introduced noodles. Inside *Dose*. Next, cheese was applied. Then paneer of uncertain biography. Then sauces whose origins couldn't be traced to any known cuisine or conscience.

The accused, growing bolder, escalated to ice cream – placed on top of *Dose*, in full public view, at temperatures inconsistent with logic or dignity.

Even *Masala Dose*, a really respected member of the community, was not spared.

Relief Sought: That the accused be required to sit in a good Darshini and eat *Plain Dose* in silence, without photographing it. That menus exceeding one page be reviewed by a competent authority, preferably someone with direct ties to *Dose*. That the tawa be recognised as a protected surface, not a lab. That the words "fusion" and "*Dose*" not appear within three inches of each other, ever!

Investigation requested on priority. Sambar is getting cold.

Musical Chairs At The Gymkhana

Yes, colonial era clubs are a privilege overdue for an eviction. But then what? Do the honours simply pass on to a new elite? What citizens must ask of any reform is, now do we get to sit on the lawns?

Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi

In the childhood game of passing the parcel, the gift moves from hand to hand while the music plays. Each child holds it for a moment, hoping the song will stop. When it does, the child holding the parcel wins.

Privilege in India is a bit like that – whimsical, unpredictable, transient. The controversy around Delhi Gymkhana Club is the lawn party where privilege jumps from hand to hand: from colonial official to civil servant, from club committee to govt file, from old elite to new guard. While the hand changes, the music remains the same: Power.

Of course, to defend Delhi Gymkhana would make me a colonial relic rooting for preferential access, dynastic privilege, and waiting periods that stretch for 30 years for non-members. Even the court took a stand: In 2024, Delhi high court held that this Club issuing "green cards" to over-21 dependents lacked any legal basis.

In a sense, Delhi Gymkhana was inviting its own eviction. Rejecting govt servants who seek its membership is, well, a reckless move. Ministry of corporate affairs had moved against the club years earlier, alleging mismanagement and conduct contrary to public interest. NCLT allowed govt intervention, and in 2024, NCLAT upheld GOI control and directed a govt-appointed committee to complete corrective measures before elections were held.

In the official spin, this is a story of reform: A mismanaged, colonial era club on public land is finally made to answer for its accounts. But here is the real question: When the state takes something from an old elite, does it return it to the people, or merely inherit it?

In *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Thorstein Veblen identified sport, consumption, and display as the code that status uses to establish itself. Over the decades, Delhi Gymkhana signalled leisure, the power to do nothing, the people who define who gets to do nothing, and where. Certainly, Delhi Gymkhana does not deserve immunity. But scrutiny is not the same as giving up judgement to the state. The old elite called it 'tradition' while the new power calls it a 'public purpose'. But as citizens, we must ask: Do we get to sit on the lawns?

Mumbai offers a corollary: Mahalaxmi Racecourse. An elite-coded space for equestrian enthusiasts is all set to be reclaimed by BMC, which plans to turn its 120 acres into a Central Park-style project. On paper, BMC's intentions sound noble (and maybe a bit delusional): Provide the city with trees, shade, air, walking paths. But in practice, civic virtue always arrives with a contractor behind it.

Farther north in Mumbai is the Flying Club, operated by AAI, holding one of the largest tranches of open land in Mumbai. This was the backyard of my childhood. I fished in Juhu Lake even as it was slowly filled up before my own eyes. Today, the lake is reduced to a pond. And the land, which was originally a green zone on the development plan, appears to have been mysteriously reclassified.

Image: AI

Many residents suspect that the builder lobby has resented the Flying Club: Aviation and radar restrictions limit the building height – and therefore profit – of surrounding construction. If BMC were genuinely intent on securing open spaces for the public, there are many options, including safeguarding Aarey Milk Colony, which is still, despite everything, Mumbai's green lungs.

The right to one's city, as Henri Lefebvre and later David Harvey argued, is not merely the right to have the state own land on one's behalf. Rather, it is the right of citizens to co-create the city, inhabit it, use it, and belong to it. A few days ago, in Paris, I experienced this as I walked down the avenues, designed for cars to pass, sidewalks for pedestrians to walk, flanked by green turf where citizens might picnic. Where are such equivalents in our metros?

Public ownership here can still produce public alienation. A citizen may be dispossessed not only by a club gate, but by overdesign, surveillance, and "beautification" schemes that make a place soul-dead. And so ugly you can faint from it. Our govt beautification programmes have yielded little beauty in verifiable, enjoyable, honourable terms. Think big gross statues; public art that makes little kids cry.

The fear is not that Mahalaxmi Racecourse will be taken from Mumbai's racing gentry, but that, after being reclaimed in the name of the people, it may be returned to them as monetised, floodlit, branded, and aesthetically vacant. One can already imagine our attention-hungry billionaires vying to put their family plaques on whatever green survives.

James C Scott warned that the state likes the world flattened into a map: Countable, taxable, securable, buildable. In our cities, that flattening also arrives with barricades, VIP entrances, ornamental shrubs, and hard paving. After all, contracts have to be handed out – the money is in the contracts. A govt can reclaim a club from the privileged but still refuse to return it to the people. And even if it does, would anyone wish to linger there?

Hindu traditions speak of cycles of creation, preservation, and destruction. Shiva's destruction prefaces renewal. Sacred destruction does not destroy to possess, but to transform. And so, the old must burn down, the high walls must fall, the gate must be open.

At the end of passing the parcel, the child holding the gift wins. But in public life, a deeper question persists. Not who is holding the parcel when the music stops. But who chose the music, who was allowed into the room – and whether the game was ever meant for everyone.

Ready When You Are, Pardner!

US is finding out it needs India. That's why Rubio is here. India should play its cards well, and leverage strategic complementarities, especially to balance China. Washington knows the math doesn't work minus New Delhi

Indrani Bagchi

Visiting US secretary of state Marco Rubio is gamely battling the Delhi heat in more ways than one. Across the table, Indian interlocutors are looking for words to describe "trust deficit" to him.

India and US find themselves facing each other at a fascinating inflection point. Washington is confronting realities that many in US preferred to postpone. Trump has had a distinctly underwhelming summit with Xi in Beijing. There was little meaningful concession from the Chinese, but there was a sobering acknowledgement in Washington that US is dealing with a genuine peer competitor. US finds itself without the leverage it needs to compel China to play by some rules. Instead, China has gamed globalisation on its own terms. The appeal of "sasta-and-sundar" Chinese products concealed a more uncomfortable reality: of weaponised supply chains and strategic dependencies.

Trump faces a similar strategic dilemma in Iran to the one Nixon and Kissinger confronted in Vietnam in the early 1970s. In a prescient essay in *Foreign Affairs*, Gideon Rose argues that "Like the fate of South Vietnam, the ultimate fate of the Iranian nuclear programme, along with that of the Iranian regime itself, will end up being decided another day." The Trump administration is relearning a lesson that great powers periodically forget: wars are often won or lost not by the ability to inflict pain, but by the capacity to absorb it. Military superiority matters, but endurance matters more.

Third, US is finding itself with fewer friends. Pakistan remains a familiar tactical partner. Others continue to engage Washington selectively. Yet the broader sense of confidence in American leadership has eroded. It may also explain why PM Modi may not be considering a trip to the White House anytime soon, notwithstanding Rubio's invite.

US is revisiting a recurring theme in its history: the temptation of splendid isolation. It wants greater protection at home and fewer burdens abroad. Trump is not an aberration so much as a product of these domestic pressures and voter preferences. Yet, recent strategic setbacks suggest that isolation may be harder to achieve than many Americans imagine. A country cannot easily detach itself from the world when it remains deeply dependent on its principal adversary for manufacturing capacity, critical inputs, and supply chains. A strategic rethink in Washington may, therefore, be inevitable.

For India, these developments offer both cautionary lessons and opportunities. Resilience is not built overnight. It's embedded in industrial systems, and baked into economic, technological, and regulatory policies. India is learning this lesson in real time.

At the bilateral level, the investments that India and US have made in each other over decades cannot disappear overnight. US remains one of the largest sources of FDI into India. American capital, technology, and higher education continue to matter enormously. Indian companies still see US as their most important market, and a crucial source of validation for innovation. None of this is likely to change.

What India needs instead is a sophisticated "plus one" strategy. Japan and India are already moving in that direction. Australia is also seeking reliable partners. This is why Quad remains vital for India. It's not in India's interests to allow the 'Indo-Pacific' to slide back into the narrower 'Asia-Pacific' framework. Such an outcome would hand China a significant strategic victory.

I have argued that the health of Quad depends substantially on the health of the India-US relationship. But it also depends on India's willingness to provide leadership and define the grouping's purpose. Too often, Quad has operated on vague premises: What will China think? How will Asean react? Those questions matter, but they cannot substitute for a positive agenda.

Quad has an opportunity to shape the future, if it openly embraces the convergence of its geoeconomic and strategic interests. How do we balance China's dominance in advanced manufacturing; build resilient supply chains for critical minerals and strategic technologies; harmonise regulations involving intellectual property, licensing, and investment, and protect data sovereignty while enabling trusted data sharing that drives innovation? Most importantly, how do the four countries build meaningful defence technology and defence manufacturing partnerships?

Yes, Quad is struggling at present. Washington's hubris is clouding strategic vision. But voices are cutting through the clutter. Mike Kuiken, a member of the US-China Security Review Commission, recently observed that India is building industrial corridors and nurturing a defence technology ecosystem that is already exporting. "This matters because the industrial math still does not work in America's favour. China's manufacturing base is now larger than those of the United States, Japan, and Germany combined…India is the only way the math begins to work."

India should double down on this opportunity. A deeper defence-industrial ecosystem could create serious strategic leverage.

The political turbulence in Washington is real, but it is ultimately America's problem to solve. US has been a difficult partner for India – insensitive, frequently transactional, and at odds with Indian interests. A better approach is neither outrage nor adulation. As external affairs minister Jaishankar advised during Trump's first term: analyse, don't demonise. That remains useful advice.

The writer is CEO, Ananta Centre. Views are personal

Calvin & Hobbes

YOUR HOUSE IS OVER THERE. WANT ME TO DRAW YOU A MAP OF HOW TO GET THERE?
OBVIOUSLY I'M NOT GOING TO MY HOUSE.
IT'S A LOT MORE OBVIOUS THAT YOU'RE NOT COMING TO MY HOUSE!
I HAVE TO STAY HERE UNTIL MY MOM GETS HOME.
WHAT?! SAYS WHO??
MY MOM AND YOUR MOM! YOU THINK I MADE THIS UP? YOU THINK I WANT TO BE HERE??
WELL, IT'S MY MOM'S RULE THAT YOU CAN SIT IN OUR YARD, BUT YOU CAN'T COME IN THE HOUSE.
YOUR MOM DIDN'T SAY THAT!

Sacred*space*

The more one can leave one's cultural home, the more easily is one able to judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision.

Edward W Said

Pursuit Of Jade, Seeking Power & Virtue

Narayani Ganesh

Large communities of OTT audiences across age groups and demographics are swooning over the new Mandarin Chinese historical drama series, titled *Pursuit of Jade*, starring two attractive leads – a disgraced nobleman and a woman pig butcher. A gripping storyline and beautiful choreography, lilting theme song, superb performances and lots of eye candy – what more could one ask for?

The title was intriguing, leading me to explore the different aspects of jade. The title itself, refers to exploring the quest for power and hidden virtue. AI tells me that in Chinese culture, an 'unpolished jade' represents a talented person who is not yet trained. *Pursuit of Jade* represents the uncovering of this potential, that is as precious as jade.

As a gemstone, jade is semi-precious but is valued more than gold in China. Its colour ranges between dark and light green, sometimes it is even whitish, but the significance is more in terms of what it represents in the psyche of people who value its spiritual import relating to soul and immortality. In the mundane world, jade is associated with political power and religious authority. Experts on Chinese culture say that jade symbolises Chinese ethics and ideologies and therefore it mirrors that progression of Chinese culture. There have been many uses of this exalted gem, including using it for tools, writing material, decorative pieces, jewellery, money and even burial suits. Mouthpieces of some opium pipes were crafted with jade to ensure longevity by breathing through it.

The royal seal in the drama *Pursuit of Jade*, the ownership of which will signify the one who sits on the throne, is made of jade. And so the stone has a multi-faceted history of meaning and usage. Jade has always meant something higher, stronger, spiritual, meaningful. Does it have anything at all to do with the word 'jaded' which has negative meaning? In fourteenth century Europe, mainly Iceland and Scotland, the term jaded referred to a 'a broken-down, worthless, vicious horse.' In contemporary usage, the word jaded has come to mean tired, weary, uninterested, unenthusiastic and so on, as in 'a jaded movie star' or, 'a public jaded by political scandal.' So jade the stone, and 'jaded' the adjective, have no link at all.

THE SPEAKING TREE

Interestingly, jade, the tough stone, has hidden musical qualities. The following saying sums it up: "If you take a hammer and hit a diamond, the diamond will shatter into a dozen pieces. Hit a piece of quartz and it will split in two. But if you hit a piece of jade, it will ring like a bell." And so it came to be that jade was used in the making of musical instruments like xylophones and also gongs and chimes. According to the International Gem Society, some use these instruments to produce 'heavenly' tones for ritual practices. Chinese poets have compared jade's melodious sound to the voice of a loved one, calling it 'the concentrated essence of love'. A truly spiritual, romantic, ethereal interpretation of jade, adding to its enigma and aura.

Starting off with the goal of self-entertainment and engagement, *Pursuit of Jade* led me on an enchanting path of discovery and knowledge of ancient Chinese culture, jade philosophy and its contemporary import – in the course of exploring the meaning of the title!

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TIMES SPORT

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | MONDAY, MAY 25, 2026

Archer hurts MI, KOs Punjab

Pacer's cameo with the bat, wickets of Rohit, Naman and Hardik take RR into playoffs

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Mumbai: Jofra Archer delivered a statement performance under pressure to propel Rajasthan Royals into the IPL 2026 playoffs, producing a match-winning all-round display against the Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday. Responding emphatically to criticism from former England captains Michael Atherton and Michael Vaughan over prioritising the IPL over a Test assignment, the 31-year-old starred with a blistering 15-ball 32 and then returned figures of 3 for 17 to seal a 30-run victory.

The win secured Royals the fourth and final playoff berth, setting up an Eliminator clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad in New Chandigarh on May 27. The result ensured that Punjab Kings (15 points) were eliminated and It also rendered the final league match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Lucknow Super Giants inconsequential. For Mumbai Indians, the defeat capped a forgettable campaign, as they finished with just four wins from 14 matches.

Defending 205, Rajasthan owed much to Archer's early burst with the ball. Bowling with hostility and sharp pace, he struck in the very first over, removing Rohit Sharma who was used as an Impact Player, for a duck with a probing 145-kmph delivery that moved away just enough to take the edge. It marked the sixth time this season Archer had struck in his opening over.

He then returned to castle Naman Dhir with a sharp inswinger, leaving Mumbai reeling at 38 for four inside six overs after Brijesh Sharma cleaned up Tilak Varma and Ryan Rickelton fell cheaply. The early damage put Rajasthan firmly in control, though Mumbai fought back through Suryakumar Yadav and Will Jacks.

Suryakumar, enduring a lean season, rediscovered his touch with his 60 off 42 balls, while Jacks counterattacked with 33 off 18. Their 63-run fifth-wicket partnership revived hopes, which were further bolstered by a 48-run sixth-wicket stand between Suryakumar and Hardik Pandya (34 off 15). However, Archer returned at a crucial moment after the second time out to dismiss Pandya with a well-directed short ball, effectively stalling the chase. Mumbai eventually finished at 175 for nine.

Earlier, Rajasthan had staged their own recovery with the bat. Asked to bat first in a must-win contest, they were in trouble at 139 for six in the 16th over before Archer's late blitz galvanised the innings. Promoted to No. 7, Archer struck three sixes and a four in his 32, injecting momentum.

Ravindra Jadeja, featuring as an Impact Player, added a brisk 19 not out off 11 balls, while Nandre Burger chipped in with a cameo 10 not out off three deliveries. Rajasthan plundered 73 runs in the last five overs, including 30 in the final two, to finish on a formidable 205 for eight.

The build-up had been uneven, with contributions coming in patches. Yashasvi Jaiswal scored a quick 27, Dhruv Jurel made 38, while Dasun Shanaka (29) and captain Riyan Parag (14) chipped in. Despite no 50-run stands, Royals' aggressive intent saw them hit 15 sixes.

Creimas

THE BIG FISH: Rajasthan Royals pacer Jofra Archer celebrates dismissing Rohit Sharma for a duck at the Wankhede on Sunday. It was Rohit's 19th duck, an unwanted IPL record he shares with Glenn Maxwell

21 Jofra Archer has produced his best IPL performance in a season at an average of 21.71 in 14 matches, bettering his tally of 20 wickets at 18.25 in 14 matches in 2020-21. Sunday's effort (32, 3/17) also was his best all-round performance.

10 Mumbai Indians have lost ten matches (won four) out of 14 contested — a dubious distinction achieved by them for the third time in a season — the previous two seasons being in 2022 & 2024.

—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

SCOREBOARD

RR: Y Jaiswal c Bosch b Jacks 27, V Sooryavanshi c Dhir b Chahar 4, D Jurel b Bosch 38, R Parag c Varma b Ghazanfar 14, D Shanaka run out (Thakur/Bosch) 29, D Ferreira c Bosch b Chahar 18, J Archer c Varma b Thakur 32, S Dubey c Dhir b Thakur 5, R Jadeja not out 19, N Burger not out 10. **Extras:** (LB-1, W-6, NB-2) 9.
Total: (For 8 wkts, 20 Overs) 205.
Fall of Wickets: 1-33, 2-33, 3-54, 4-99, 5-119, 6-139, 7-174, 8-175.
Bowling: D Chahar 4-0-43-2, W Jacks 2-0-12-1, A Ghazanfar 3-0-45-1, R Sharma 3-0-25-0, S Thakur 4-0-41-2, C Bosch 4-0-38-1.
MI: R Sharma c Dhruv Jurel b Jofra Archer 0, R Rickelton c Sooryavanshi b Burger 12, N Dhir b Archer 6, S Yadav c and b Burger 60, T Varma b Brijesh 3, W Jacks c Jurel b Punja 33, H Pandya c Burger b Archer 34, C Bosch c Ferreira b Punja 2, S Thakur not out 10, D Chahar lbw Brijesh 8, A Ghazanfar not out 2. **Extras:** (W-4, NB-1) 5
Total: (For 9 wkts, 20 Overs) 175.
Fall of Wickets: 1-0, 2-18, 3-24, 4-38, 5-101, 6-149, 7-152, 8-158, 9-167.
Bowling: Jofra Archer 4-0-17-3, Nandre Burger 4-0-43-2, Brijesh Sharma 4-0-26-2, R Jadeja 2-0-24-0, YR Punja 4-0-44-2, D Shanaka 2-0-21-0.
Result: RR won by 30 runs.
Player-of-the-Match: J Archer.

Playoffs schedule

May 26: Qualifier 1: RCB vs GT, Dharamshala.
May 27: Eliminator: SRH vs RR, New Chandigarh.
May 29: Qualifier 2: New Chandigarh.
May 31: Final, Ahmedabad.

Rahul, Kuldeep star as DC outclass KKR

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Kolkata: Eventually for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), it was not to be. When skipper Ajinkya Rahane walked out for the toss with Delhi Capitals (DC) captain Axar Patel, he would still have been clinging on to slim hope. However, by the time DC openers Abishek Porel and KL Rahul stepped out to bat, invited to do so by Rahane, that hope had all but vanished. What stared at them was a dead rubber.

In such situations, the spotlight is always on individual performances rather than team totals. For the record, DC won the contest by 40 runs. Chasing DC's 203 for five, KKR were bowled out for 163 in 18.4 overs.

Experienced warhorses Rahul and Rahane gave the 40,000-odd fans reasons to applaud, both scoring half-centuries and underlining their utility in this format. Rahane quickly got over the disappointment of missing out on a playoffs spot by scoring 63 off 39 balls. The KKR captain was one of Kuldeep Yadav's three victims, others being Cameron Green (2) and Rinku Singh (0, a first for him in IPL), a spell which broke KKR's back. Lungi Ngidi also grabbed three wickets, while Mitchell Starc bagged two.

DC were perhaps in a more worry-free situation given that they were already out of reckoning in the playoff race. And that was evident in the manner Rahul went about his task. His half-century came in just 25 balls.

It was a refined innings from a batter who relies more on proper cricket shots than flamboyance. His strikes were clean and the four sixes in his 60 had a stamp of class.

Axar swung his arms quite freely for his 39, the straight six off Varun Chakravarthy in the bowler's fourth over was worth a mention. Axar spoilt Varun's figures somewhat with two sixes in that over, but the spinner had the last laugh, having the DC skipper caught by Rinku Singh when he went for a heave too many.

Vidarbha medium-pacer Saurabh Dubey, who was warming the KKR benches in the early matches, proved he was right up there with the best conceding just five runs in his first spell of two overs. He eventually finished at 2 for 28.

Brief scores: Delhi Capitals: 203/5 in 20 overs (KL Rahul 60, Axar Patel 39) bt **KKR 163 all out in 18.4 overs** (Ajinkya Rahane 63; Kuldeep Yadav 3/29) by 40 runs.

THE PIC KOSTYUK COULDN'T FORGET

Tearful Kostyuk Speaks Of Russian Missiles That Narrowly Miss Parents' Home In Ukraine

MARTA KOSTYUK

THE TIMES OF INDIA AT ROLAND GARROS

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Paris: Not long after Marta Kostyuk walked into her post-match press conference at Roland Garros, she held up her phone, revealing a photograph of a burning high-rise building. The apartment block, which was struck by a powerful Russian missile, stands barely 100 metres from her parents' home in Kyiv. Her mother, sister and an elderly relative were inside when it happened.

Kostyuk received the image at 8 am, some three hours before her French Open first-round match on Sunday. The 23-year-old broke down in tears, but still laced up and walked onto court.

The 15th seed at Roland Garros beat Russian Oksana Selekhmeteva 6-2, 6-3 in 78 minutes.

Later, Kostyuk admitted the scheduling may have helped her. Not only was she spared the worst of the 31-degree heat by playing early, she also had little time to sit alone with her thoughts.

"I didn't know what to expect from myself. I didn't know how my focus was going to be, how I'm going to be able to control my emotions or my thoughts," she said. "There were obviously times in the match when I would go back to thinking about it, because most of the morning I felt sick. If it was 100 meters closer, I probably wouldn't have my mom and sister."

"I'm also very happy that I played the first match, because I don't know what would be the outcome if I played last, for example," she said. " but I'm very proud of myself today, of how we all handled it, and, you know, happy to be in the second round and that everyone is alive."

For Kostyuk, who struck 20 winners on the day, it was the closest the war had come to her family, yet withdrawing from the match never crossed her mind.

"I knew that this is the day to go out and play," she said. "My biggest example is Ukrainian people. I woke up in the morning today and I looked at all these people who woke up and kept living their lives, kept helping people who are in need."

Kostyuk has endured tougher moments over the last four years.

"The beginning of the war was probably the most difficult because of the unknown, we didn't know what was going on," she said of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. "My whole family was there, we had 17 people in the house. It was just the unknown then. Right now it was the closest that it has ever been to my house, so this is what probably makes it the most emotional."

"I have also adapted to the fact that the tour forgot about it," she said of the WTA Tour. "I'm still trying to do things that I can do and also use my platform, I use my speeches whenever I have a moment to remind people about it."

"People adapt, people forget, people move on," she said.

In other matches, second seed **Alexander Zverev stopped Frenchman Benjamin Bonzi 6-3, 6-4, 6-2**. Among the women, **American Hailey Baptiste** rallied to beat the **2021 French Open champion Barbora Krejcokova 6-7 (7), 7-6 (6), 6-2**. Eighth seed **Mirra Andreeva** stopped **Fiona Ferro 6-3, 6-3**.

A race against doubt: Gurindervir's road to 10.09

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GURINDERVIR SINGH

Ranchi: When Gurindervir Singh ran 10.20s in March last year to break the men's 100m national record, it was almost as if people couldn't believe what they were witnessing. But over the next 12 months, despite repeated attempts, he couldn't come close to it again.

It was almost as if he wasn't ready for the crown, and it slipped away from him.

"He wasn't mentally prepared to break the record. So, when it happened, it came as a surprise. Suddenly, there was a barrage of pressure, and he just wasn't ready for it," said James Hillier, athletics director with Reliance Foundation. "He couldn't really cope with it."

However, when he broke the national record again on Friday evening with a time of 10.17s, things felt different. This time, he knew there was far more left in him. "I just ran the first 80m," he said after easing off in the final metres.

He then saw it fall within minutes as Animesh Kujur ran 10.15s. But Gurindervir seemed to know he would have the last laugh and he did exactly that, clocking a blistering 10.09s in Saturday's final to become the first Indian to go below 10.10s.

So confident was he that he began celebrating even before crossing the finish line. When the clock stopped at 10.09s, it only confirmed what he already believed — he was the fastest Indian again.

It meant a lot as he celebrated wildly, throwing his spikes and roaring into the Ranchi sky, a validation for the work he had put in after being told in his youth to switch events. "The driving force was the need to prove something to myself and others. Growing up, I often heard that Indians don't have the genetics for sprinting. Even now, people say that. I wanted to change that mindset," said the sprinter from Punjab.

"Just like Milkha Singh created a path in the 400m and Neeraj Chopra did in javelin, I want to create one in sprinting so others can believe they can do it too."

While that has been a key motivator, his rivalry with Animesh has also pushed him. After Animesh broke his record last year and again in the heats on Friday, the duel intensified.

"I've been waiting for a rivalry like this. It pushes both of us and brings more attention to the sport. When he runs well, I feel the need to do better, and when I perform, he steps up too. It's great for Indian sprinting," he said.

Even Hillier believes that rivalry helped Gurindervir dip below 10.10s. But despite the battle on track, their bond remains strong. "We are very good friends. We're roommates and like brothers. We are competitors only on the track and off it, we're just friends," he added.

His journey, though, began much earlier, during annual Diwali clean-ups at home when he would polish his father Kamaljeet Singh's medals and shields. "He played volleyball for Punjab and Punjab Police at the national level. There's a picture of him smashing the ball, and that really inspired me to become an athlete," Gurindervir said. "Later, I started watching athletes like Usain Bolt and Asafa Powell and tried to learn as much as possible."

Homeboy Carlsen, Gukesh on board

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MAGNUS CARLSEN

Oslo (Norway): The European summer — cool and pleasant — has greeted the dozen players for the Norway chess tournament which begins on Monday.

With the involvement of world champion D Gukesh and chess monarch Magnus Carlsen featuring in the over-the-board classical tournament, entertainment is guaranteed. And yes, there is a way to calm your nerves — the beautiful lake Sognsvann is a short stroll away from the buzzing city centre that is dotted with glitzy hotels and doubles as a transport hub.

The women's field will be led by China's multiple world champion Ju Wenjun.

Two men who had a busy GCT classical leg in Bucharest will also be part of the six-player field — Vincent Keymer of Germany and Iranian-turned Frenchman Alireza Firouzja. Keymer won that event by half a point from Fabiano Caruana of the US. Though he is in peak form, he has missed out on the Candidates. On the other hand, Alireza sprained his ankle, skipped one round and played two games from a hotel room in Romania before withdrawing. The Norway organisers had also invited Arjun Erigaisi last year. They have got R Praggnanandhaa on board this time. Pragg ended Javokhir Sindarov's undefeated streak in classical chess in Romania.

The tournament will be played at the Deichman Bjorvika, the main branch of Oslo Public Library, a neo-modern architectural marvel.

Sindarov checks in

After a hectic schedule of Cyprus Candidates meet which he won followed by GCT Rapid & Blitz in Poland and GCT classical in Romania, Uzbek GM Javokhir Sindarov is not going home. He will be in Oslo cheering for his close friend Bibisara Assaubayeva. (THE JOURNALIST IS IN OSLO ON THE INVITATION OF NORWAY CHESS)

HAALAND WEIGHS IN FOR NORWAY CHESS

Besides securing a deal with FIDE for owning, hosting and conducting the Total World Championship for the next 12 years, the Norway organisers have also got the country's sporting icons Johannes Klaebo and Erling Haaland as investors. Cross-country skier Klaebo is multiple Winter Olympics gold medallist and Manchester City's star footballer Haaland's company have shown deep interest. The total additional money raised via a variety of investors is $10m.

Kjell Madland, CEO of Norway Chess, said, "They (Haaland's people) wanted to be one of the biggest owners of the company."

There will be an annual prize fund of $2.7m for their Total World Championship next year.

Meena and Kuldeep clear 5.45m for joint pole vault record

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Ranchi: After a historic day, it was the pole-vaulting duo of Dev Meena and Kuldeep Kumar wrote their names into the record books on Sunday as they became joint holders of the national record.

IBoth cleared 5.45m on the third day of the National Senior Athletics Federation Competition at Birsa Munda Stadium. Kuldeep came into the competition with the national record of 5.41m, set earlier this month. However, Dev Meena bettered it when he cleared 5.42m. The record, though, lasted only a few minutes as Kuldeep went over 5.45m. But it wasn't enough to secure the title, as his training partner Dev equalled the mark soon after and won gold on countback.

Wife, sister and conditioning coach chip in for TJ

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TEJASWIN SHANKAR

Ranchi: In high-altitude mountaineering, the area above 8000m is called the death zone. There, the rarefied air can cause anything from exhaustion to death, which is why most climbers rely on supplemental oxygen during the ascent.

For Tejaswin Shankar, who crossed a different 8000-mark on Saturday, that oxygen came in the form of his wife Siddhi Hiray, sister Avantika and strength and conditioning coach Wayne Lombard. They kept him in good spirits, ensured he stayed relaxed, offered feedback between events and provided all the required support he needed.

"We just made sure that whenever he was near us, we cracked some jokes, shared some random Bollywood gossip or played some music to lighten the mood," Avantika, who is an advocate, told **TOI** on the sidelines of the National Senior Athletics Federation Competition at Birsa Munda Stadium, Morabadi, here.

Siddhi, meanwhile, also had to wear the coach's hat as Tejaswin competed in 10 events over two days and accumulated a total of 8057 points — a first by an Indian, which also included his personal best in four events. To be able to do that, she has been shadowing Kip Janvrin, Tejaswin's coach in the US and has also been doubling up as his part-time coach. But this time, as he attempted to qualify for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, they took a slightly different approach. "We didn't calculate scores. We just wanted to go with the flow," said Siddhi, "He had already achieved the qualifying mark in the US, but it was wind-assisted, so he wanted to hit the standard here. We didn't have the 8,000-point mark in mind, but he managed it."

"The idea is to keep me distracted in those crucial moments, because you can easily get caught up in your emotions. But you want to trust your muscle memory, and they keep reminding me that I have it in me," said the CWG bronze medallist in high jump.

Wayne, who has been working with Tejaswin since 2017, had the primary role to ensure he stayed "well-fuelled and properly recovered". He added that TJ has become like a friend and brother to him.

GALLERY

Russell snatches pole

George Russell said he and championship-leading Mercedes team-mate Kimi Antonelli had "respect for one another" after clashing on Saturday and then locking out the front row of the grid in the Canadian Grand Prix. The 28-year-old Briton took pole position with a spectacular late flying lap to foil his precocious 19-year-old Italian teammate in the final seconds of a tense and closely-fought qualifying session. Antonelli qualified second behind Russell whose pole lap in one minute and 12.578 seconds lifted him top by just 0.068 seconds.

NRAI names squad for Munich WC: India will field a 22-member squad at the ISSF Rifle/Pistol World Cup in Munich from May 24 to 31, with double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker set to compete in two individual pistol events besides the mixed team competition. Alongside Manu, Olympian and world championship medallist Esha Singh will also feature in two individual pistol events as India's leading shooters return to top-level international competition away from home for the first time this season.

Pranavi finishes tied-17th: Pranavi Urs stumbled on the final day to finish T-17 and while Diksha Dagar was T-20 at the Lalla Meryem Cup, in Rabat, Morocco. Pranavi finished the week with a total score of 4-under par (70-71-74) while Diksha finished with a score of 3-under par (75-70-71).

Tanvi loses in final: Young Indian shuttler Tanvi Patri signed off with a runner-up finish at the $ 10,000 Austrian Open International Series after going down to Canada's Rachel Chan in the women's singles final in Graz on Sunday. Patri lost 14-21, 17-21 to the top-seeded Canadian. In mixed doubles, the Indian pair of Sathish Karunakaran and Zenith Abbigail also ended runners-up after losing 21-19, 13-21, 20-22 to seventh-seeded Germans Jan Colin Voelker and Emma Moszczynski.

Talwar drops to tied-56th: After two fine rounds, India's Saptak Talwar faltered in the third, carding a 3-over 75 to drop down to tied-56th at the Danish Golf Challenge in Odense, Denmark. Talwar, who shot 67-70 on the first two days, is now 5-under for 54 holes. Arjun Prasad, the other Indian in the field, had missed the cut.

Sandhu shoots 68: Yuvraj Sandhu shot a second straight 3-under 68 to be placed tied-33rd at the end of third round at Soudal Open on the DP World Tour in Rinkven, Belgium. Sandhu with rounds of 70-68-68 is now 7-under as he slipped down one place. Earlier Shubhankar Sharma missed the halfway cut.

Mansi, Kajal, Sumit strike gold: Mansi Lather, Kajal and Sumit clinched gold medals on the second day of the U-23 Asian Wrestling Championships in Da Nang, Vietnam on Sunday. The Indians also secured two silver and three bronze.

Moody hints at leadership reset at LSG

Pant's Captaincy Under Fire After Two Dismal Seasons

Fazal Khan | TNN

Lucknow: Lucknow Super Giants appear to be heading for a leadership overhaul after enduring successive dismal IPL campaigns, with Director of Cricket Tom Moody indicating significant changes, while also admitting that skipper Rishabh Pant has struggled to handle the pressures of captaincy.

Moody said the leadership group will "seriously" review the future and that the team may need a "reset", with LSG finishing at the bottom of the points table with four wins and 10 losses. Their campaign ended with a defeat to Punjab Kings (PBKS) in their final league match on Saturday.

On Pant's captaincy, Moody said, "From a captaincy point of view, he's found it challenging, obviously, and the results reflect that. And you have to wonder whether that is a pressure that is reflected with his performance with the bat. I know that this season has been a difficult season for us, but we will reflect on it.

"It will take time. We'll consider all things, but certainly we haven't lived up to the expectation or the standard that we expect of ourselves." Moody said, suggesting that the franchise would consider changes across the setup.

"When it comes to the leadership of the franchise, it's certainly something that we'll be taking some very serious consideration to what it looks like in the future. Like every department, when you do reflect on the off season, we will be making some considered decisions, but it certainly looks like that, you know, we're needing to consider a reset," he said.

The franchise's leadership group this season included Moody, strategic advisor Kane Williamson and head coach Justin Langer, but results did not improve. After finishing seventh in IPL 2025, LSG are set to end IPL 2026 in either ninth or 10th place, depending on Mumbai Indians' final result.

Under captain Rishabh Pant, LSG have managed 10 wins in 28 matches across the last two seasons. Pant, signed for a record Rs 27 crore, also struggled with the bat this season, scoring 312 runs in 14 innings at a strike rate of 138.05. "To be honest with you, you only have to look at the two years. We came seventh last year. Obviously this is my first year with the franchise. This year we have come last," Moody said.

Asked about responsibility for the poor season, Moody said accountability was shared across the group. "I think we're all responsible. I don't think it's a time to point the finger at any individual. I think we all take accountability and as I said, now's not the time to be portioning blame in any particular department," he said.

Reuters

TESTING TIMES: Rishabh Pant

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NR	NRR	P
RCB	14	9	5	0	0.783	18
GT	14	9	5	0	0.695	18
SRH	14	9	5	0	0.524	18
RR	14	8	6	0	0.189	16
PBKS	14	7	6	1	0.309	15
DC	14	7	7	0	-0.651	14
KKR	14	6	7	1	-0.147	13
CSK	14	6	8	0	-0.345	12
MI	14	4	10	0	-0.584	8
LSG	14	4	10	0	-0.740	8

'Things happen in the heat of the moment'

Gaurav.Gupta @timesofindia.com

Mumbai: IPL-2026 has delivered thrilling cricket, explosive batting and dramatic finishes, but the tournament has also witnessed heated on-field moments — from aggressive celebrations and unnecessary send-offs to visible player frustration.

One such incident came after Royal Challengers Bengaluru's loss against Sunrisers Hyderabad in Hyderabad on Friday, when **Virat Kohli** appeared to avoid shaking hands with Australia opener Travis Head after the match. During the chase, Kohli was also seen exchanging words with Head.

In another flashpoint earlier this week, Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya broke the stumps in frustration after teammates Deepak Chahar and Robin Minz dropped a catch during MI's clash against Kolkata Knight Riders. Reacting to such incidents, cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar said emotions can boil over in high-pressure situations. "In the heat of the moment, things happen. Anybody can snap," Gavaskar said on Sunday at the launch of the eighth edition of Midwicket Stories.

"Everybody wants to be the best role model possible, but all of us are human, and sometimes we fail those standards. Today, everything comes into the public domain much quicker than before," he added.

Meanwhile, **TOI** has learnt that neither the BCCI nor the IPL is likely to censure Kohli for not shaking hands with Head, as handshakes fall under the "spirit of cricket" and are not mandatory. "Even India and Pakistan players don't always shake hands after matches," a BCCI source said.

Kane treble wins Bayern Munich German Cup title

Berlin: Harry Kane cut through the smoke of the German Cup final with a hat trick for Bayern Munich to beat defending champion Stuttgart 3-0 and complete another domestic double. Kane's goals in the second half set off fireworks among the Bayern fans who had joined their Stuttgart rivals in protesting against the German soccer federation (DFB) for a planned increase in security measures.

Kane broke the deadlock shortly afterward with a diving header to Michael Olise's cross in the 55th minute. That prompted more fireworks from the Bayern fans, worsening the already poor visibility and leading to a break in play.

Kane struck the crossbar with a thunderous shot before sealing the result in the 80th with a shot inside the bottom corner after being picked out by Luis Diaz.

Angelo Stiller conceded a penalty for hand ball and Kane completed his hat trick from the spot in stoppage time.

Champions Arsenal finish season with win at Palace

London: Arsenal celebrated their coronation as Premier League champions with a 2-1 win over Crystal Palace on Sunday, capping a remarkable season that saw them finish with 85 points.

Pep farewell spoiled as City lose to Villa

Pep Guardiola bid an emotional farewell to Manchester City as a 2-1 defeat to Aston Villa brought down the curtain on a glittering decade under the Catalan.

Sunderland beat Chelsea to secure European spot

Sunderland became only the fifth side in EPL history to qualify for Europe in their first season following promotion after beating Chelsea 2-1 on Sunday.

United blank Brighton

Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes set a new outright record of 21 assists in a single EPL season when he set up Patrick Dorgu's goal in a 3-0 win at Brighton. AGENCIES

Swara earns WIM title

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Bengaluru: At just 19, Bengaluru's rising chess talent **Swara Lakshmi Nair** has added a milestone to her growing list of achievements by securing the Women's International Master (WIM) title recently.

The youngster, who took up chess in 2017, became only the second player from Karnataka after Isha Sharma to achieve the prestigious title.

To earn the WIM title, a player must cross the 2200 Elo rating mark and secure three norms in international tournaments. Swara achieved the required rating in Italy last year and collected two norms in Italy and Poland in 2025. However, the final step proved tougher, as she had to wait another 10 months before clinching her third norm at the Ptuj IM tournament, which is part of the Slovenia Chess tour, on May 1. She followed it up with a fourth norm just 10 days later in Italy.

CHESS

"I am extremely happy as it is an important milestone in my career," said Swara, a first-year BA student at Bishop Cotton Women's Christian College. Swara has steadily built an impressive resume at both domestic and international levels. Among her notable achievements is a bronze medal at the 2022 Commonwealth U-20 Chess Championship in the girls' category.

In 2023, the teenager was part of India's gold medal-winning blitz team and silver medal-winning rapid team at the Asian Youth Chess Championship held in the UAE.

"I have worked hard throughout my career, and this achievement is proof of that. It motivates me to aim even higher in the sport and bring greater laurels," she added.

For now, though, Swara's focus has temporarily shifted from the chessboard to academics. Accompanied by her mother, Indira on most international trips, the Bengaluru player is currently preparing for her upcoming BA examinations and plans to resume competitive tournaments from July.

Top stars vie for Para Games berth

Bengaluru: Paris Paralympic champion Sumit Antil will lead India's top athletes as they take part in the 8th Indian Open Para Athletics International Championship beginning at the Sree Kanteerava stadium here on Tuesday.

The three-day meet will serve as the final selection trial to pick the national squad for the Asian Para Games to be held in Aichi Prefecture, Nagoya, Japan, in Oct. A total of 350 athletes will be in action, looking to book their berth for the continental meet.

ATHLETICS

"India has been allotted only 60 places (in athletics) for the Asian Para Games this time and that makes it even more difficult for the top athletes to make the squad," Paralympic Committee of India president Devendra told TOI. "At present, we have a total of about 250 athletes who have met the Minimum Qualifying Standards (MQS) from which the squad had to be pruned to 60 based on performance. That makes it crucial for the athletes to perform here," PCI chairperson Satyanarayan said. Athletes from five other countries will also be in action as they compete to make the MQS.

Ace javelin thrower Sumit, who will be looking to defend his title in Japan, was optimistic of producing another fine show. "Our athletes have been doing well and I'm confident that we will continue our fine show," the double Paralympics gold medallist said. The Haryana athlete, who won the gold in the World Para Athletics GP in New Delhi in March, arrived here after a solid training stint under coach Vipin Kasana. Karnataka's challenge will be led by Asian Para Games gold medallist Rakshitha Raju (women's 1500m).

Karnataka athletes in action: Women: Harshita Tater, Bharathi Bharathesh (100m T37), Soumya (400m T12), Rakshitha Raju (1500m T11), Radha Venkatesh (1500m T13), Manjula H Kumarappa, Gangavva Neelappa Harijan (shot put F11/12), Medha Jayanth (shot put F33), K Shyla Shilpa (discus throw F56/57). **Men:** D Sachidanda (100m T38), Basavaraja Kuruba, Siddarth Manjunath (100m T44), KG Keshava Murthy (400m T11), MS Sharath (1500 T13), Rakshith HS (High jump T63). TNN

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French Open dark horse Alexander Zverev starts his Roland Garros campaign with a meticulous 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 first-round demolition of France's Benjamin Bonzi in searing heat

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You are earning rental income and you don't know...

...but the taxman does. Here's how the income tax department is using data-driven nudges — not raids — to get taxpayers to come clean

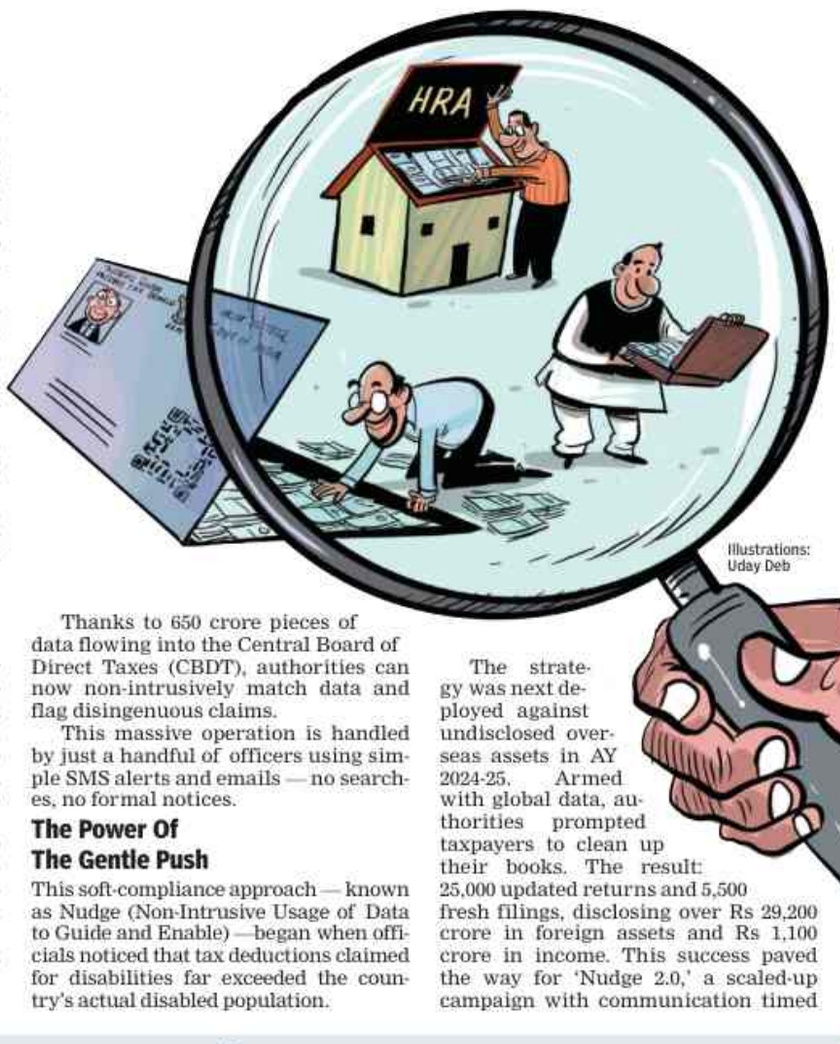
Sidhartha@timesofindia.com

A few years ago, tax authorities stumbled upon individuals with significant rental income who were not filing returns. Closer scrutiny revealed that a few salaried employees were misusing these individuals' PANs (Permanent Account Numbers), making false claims of rent payment to secure tax-free House Rent Allowance (HRA).

A limited-period data analytics initiative launched by the tax department revealed that over three years, 28,174 taxpayers had made HRA claims disproportionate to their salaries. When approached by authorities, nearly 4,200 updated their returns, reversing bogus claims worth Rs 217 crore and yielding Rs 120 crore in additional tax revenue. While claiming HRA based on rent paid to relatives (including parents) is perfectly legal, it holds only if the recipient declares that income and pays tax on it.

Tightening The Reins On Deductions

This crackdown follows an earlier successful experiment where simple administrative tweaks to Income Tax Return (ITR) forms drastically curbed bogus claims for health insurance premiums and higher education loan interest. By mandating taxpayers to share the policy number, insurer name, and a breakdown of the premium, the department saw the number of taxpayers claiming medical insurance deductions plummet by 49% to 51.8 lakh in assessment year (AY) 2025-26. Similarly, after asking for education loan account numbers and outstanding balances, claims fell by 76% to just 3.7 lakh.



Illustrations: Uday Deb

Thanks to 650 crore pieces of data flowing into the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), authorities can now non-intrusively match data and flag disingenuous claims.

This massive operation is handled by just a handful of officers using simple SMS alerts and emails — no searches, no formal notices.

The Power Of The Gentle Push

This soft-compliance approach — known as Nudge (Non-Intrusive Usage of Data to Guide and Enable) — began when officials noticed that tax deductions claimed for disabilities far exceeded the country's actual disabled population.

The strategy was next deployed against undisclosed overseas assets in AY 2024-25. Armed with global data, authorities prompted taxpayers to clean up their books. The result: 25,000 updated returns and 5,500 fresh filings, disclosing over Rs 29,200 crore in foreign assets and Rs 1,100 crore in income. This success paved the way for 'Nudge 2.0,' a scaled-up campaign with communication timed around compliance deadlines. It triggered the disclosure of nearly Rs 1 lakh crore in foreign assets and Rs 835 crore in additional income.

Cracking The Political Donation Scam

The data engine achieved another major breakthrough by targeting bogus donations to Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs). The scam had grown brazen; intermediaries were advertising "guaranteed tax refunds" in cinema halls and on social media for a commission. WhatsApp and Telegram networks were buzzing, and some CSR-linked trusts were facilitating fake donation receipts in exchange for cashbacks.

The CBDT analysed the data to flag over 2 lakh suspicious deductions totalling around Rs 5,500 crore claimed under section 80GGC. By late Jan, the campaign led nearly 7 lakh taxpayers to voluntarily reduce their claims by almost Rs 10,000 crore, recovering Rs 1,758 crore in taxes. More importantly, it permanently altered taxpayer behaviour: political donation claims plunged to 1.2 lakh in AY 2025-26 from a peak of 3.6 lakh two years prior.

From Enforcement To 'Saksham' Awareness

From inflated agricultural income to hidden capital gains and virtual digital assets, the CBDT is widening its net. In AY 2025-26, the department slowed down refund processing to analyse data for red flags before dispatching dedicated mailers.

Data is systematically pulled from banks, stock exchanges, property registrars, and external tax filings to be cross-referenced with ITRs.

"We have adopted a more scientific approach over the last 18 months because we cannot bombard the system with lakhs of notices," explains CBDT chairman Ravi Agrawal. "The approach has shifted from intrusive questioning to spreading awareness. We identify potential irregularities, look at data to isolate suspicious entities, and set a threshold for action."

This research-driven framework is organised under an internal acronym: Saksham (Sankalan, Anusandhan, Kriyanvan, Sampark, Hastak, Adhikar, Mulyankan).

"If people know that we are aware of what they missed, they comply on their own," Agrawal says, noting that this "trust-first" approach assumes an oversight rather than evasion. Often, even taxpayers who haven't received a mail end up updating their returns out of peer awareness.

A Warning For Habitual Offenders

However, the department's patience has its limits. One salaried IT executive claimed several deductions under section 80. When a Nudge email arrived, he revised his return but simply shifted the fake claims to section 10 exemptions. The department ran out of patience, and he faced formal penalties.

While traditional scrutiny and audits continue in parallel, the Nudge initiative has reshaped Indian tax compliance by turning data visibility into a highly effective psychological deterrent.

> "We identify potential irregularities, look at data to isolate suspicious entities, and set a threshold for action"
>
> **Ravi Agrawal,** CHAIRMAN, CBDT

TOO MANY DISABILITY CLAIMS

Disability deduction claims in a recent year were disproportional to disabled population. That mismatch helped push the tax department towards data-led nudges instead of blanket notices

SMALL NUDGE, BIG IMPACT

8-fold jump in foreign asset disclosures in 5 years — from 60,467 in 2021-22 to nearly 5 lakh in 2025-26

Health, education claims fell steeply, too

	AY2024-25	AY2025-26	Change
Medical insurance claims	101.6L	51.8L	-49.0%
Higher education loan claims	15.6L	3.7L	-76.3%

1.25 crore income tax returns have been updated or revised under 'Saksham Nudge' initiative, resulting in tax revenue of **₹12,122 cr**

Source: CBDT

SNAP SHOTS

Srishti crowned champion

India's **Srishti Kiran**, 13, clinched her first ITF J60 crown, coming through 7-5, 6-1 against the top-seed 16-year-old Eve Thibault of Canada in the final on Saturday in El Salvador. The Bengaluru girl, now based in the United States, claimed the title without dropping a set. Enroute to the summit clash, she had earned a bye in the first round. She blanked Valentina Fuentes Bigio of Puerto Rico 6-0, 6-0 in the second round, while quelling the challenge of Camila Morataya of the host nation 6-4, 6-1 in the quarterfinal before defeating Mildalyn Daguilar of the USA in the semifinals 6-2, 6-3.

Karnataka men in quarters: Karnataka claimed an 87-67 win over Chandigarh in the men's section of the Junior National Basketball Championship in Puducherry on Sunday. Samarth Kumar starred with 33 points for Karnataka, who clinched their third straight win in Group B to seal their quarterfinal berth. In the women's category, Karnataka defeated Tamil Nadu 69-62 with Nilaya Reddy (19 points) and Nidhi Umesh (18) leading from the front. **Results (only Karnataka): Men:** Karnataka 87 (Samarth Kumar 33, Vaibhav Gowda 12, Anshul Sai 12) bt Chandigarh 67 (Ajay 21, Tushar 17, Abhishek Yadav 10). **Women:** Karnataka 69 (Nilaya Reddy 19, Nidhi Umesh 18, Shravani Shivanna 13) bt Tamil Nadu 62 (M Kavya 17, Sumithra Devi 12, Lakshmi Priya 10).

Mandya clinch thriller: HBR Basketball Club, Bangalore Vanguards, Mandya and Dakshina Kannada entered the super league stage of the State B division basketball league for men at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium courts on Sunday. In a hard-fought contest, Mandya, who were trailing Vanguards 23-33 at halftime, rallied to a 52-50 victory. **Results:** Mandya 52 (Shashidhar 17, Shrujan 12) bt Bangalore Vanguards 50 (Vyas 14) HT: 23-33; Vimanapura SC 73 (Rakshan 21, Rishab 18) bt Bangalore Sporting 63 (Ayush 21, Joe 15) HT: 32-28; IBBC: 53 (Franklyn 15, Sanath 13) bt Devanga Union 19. HT: 21-4.

B'lore Reds prevail: Bangalore Reds FC registered a 3-1 win over Town SC Hoskote in the BDFA 'C' Division league football championship in Bengaluru on Sunday. While Praveen Kumar V struck the opener in the 24th minute, Varun M and NandaKumar chipped in with a goal each. **Results: Group 2:** Bangalore Reds FC 3 (Praveen Kumar V 24, Varun M 32, NandaKumar 54) bt Town SC Hoskote FC 1 (Rohan N 61); Jai Bharath Nagar FC 2 (K Shashank 26, Manoj Kumar S 60+2) bt J Sports FC 1 (Kaihrii Johnague 56). **Group 3:** Rovers FC 7 (Surya K 33, 43, Eromiya Freancis 34, Puneeth 36, 39, Arvind 57, Nind 50) bt Modern Boys FC 1 (Sunil 54); 515 ABWS FC 0 drew with Queens Star FC 0. Group 4: JP Sports FC 5 (Kiran 5, A Arun 16, Rahul 50-pen, Prashanth 57, 60+1) bt Vel Socials FC 0; Nationals FC 1 (Anthony 2) bt Netaji FC 0.

Pranati earns vault silver

Indian Scores 13.025 At The FIG World Challenge Cup

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After forced to skip the Gymnastics National Championships due to injury earlier this month, it was her determination to "never stop believing" that made Pranati Nayak come back strong to win silver in the vault event at the FIG World Challenge Cup 2026 in Tashkent on Saturday.

Pranati secured a score of 13.025 in the vault final to finish on the podium in the Uzbekistan capital. Her first vault was a Chusovitina (4.40), which earned her 12.950 points, while her second was a Tsukahara (4.40) for which she was awarded 12.700 points. She also received a bonus of 0.20, taking her total to 13.025.

GYMNASTICS

Thi Quynh Nhu Nguyen of Vietnam claimed gold, while Uzbekistan's Shakhinabonu Yusufova won bronze.

Reflecting on her achievement, the trainee at Odisha AM/NS India Gymnastics High Performance Centre in Bhubaneswar, posted, "The last couple of months have not been easy. There were moments of doubt, setbacks and hard days, but through it all, I never stopped believing. Standing on the podium with this medal is proof that patience, perseverance and faith always pay off."

Getty Images

FINE SHOW: Pranati Nayak

Chief coach Ashok Mishra said, "Pranati has once again showcased her talent and determination on the international stage. This silver medal is a proud moment for Indian gymnastics and for everyone working towards the growth of the sport in Odisha. We are confident she will continue to achieve greater heights in the future."

This was Pranati's first international event since the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Jakarta, where she injured herself after a fall during the vault qualification. She eventually pulled out without attempting her second vault and finished without a ranking.

Although the season came to a disappointing end, she had a strong previous season, finishing on the podium at the FIG World Cup in Antalya, Turkey, and the Women's Artistic Gymnastics Asian Championships. Her focus now will be on qualifying for the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, though it remains to be seen whether she will make it.

Cricketer Akshay passes away during league game

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: In a tragic incident during a KSCA III Division league match here on Sunday, former Karnataka cricketer **SL Akshay** passed away. He was 39.

Akshay was representing Sapphire Cricket Club against Bharath CC at the SLS Kreedangana ground. The medium pacer, batting at No. 11 for his side after Sapphire won the toss, later bowled four overs and picked up a wicket.

OBITUARY

While fielding in the slip cordon, Akshay reportedly felt unwell and walked off the field. Moments later, he collapsed after vomiting. He was rushed to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead due to a heart attack.

Hailing from Shivamogga, Akshay made his debut for Karnataka in the 2009-10 Vijay Hazare Trophy against Hyderabad before earning his Ranji Trophy cap in the 2011-12 season. Competing in an era when Karnataka possessed a strong pace attack, opportunities were limited, but he made notable contributions in the matches he featured in, including three List A, nine T20s and six first-class matches.

Beyond his playing career, Akshay was widely respected for his work as a coach. A passionate wildlife enthusiast and photographer away from cricket, he had turned his attention to nurturing young talent over the past few years. Last season, he served as Karnataka's U-19 bowling coach.

Mourning Akshay's untimely passing, KSCA, in a statement, said, "Akshay represented Karnataka with distinction at the first-class level and, even beyond his playing career, continued to serve the game with unwavering passion and dedication. As a junior-level coach, he played a pivotal role in nurturing and mentoring young cricketers, leaving an enduring impact on the development of cricketing talent in the state. His commitment to the sport, gentle nature, and selfless contribution towards shaping the next generation of cricketers earned him immense respect and admiration across the cricketing fraternity. Karnataka cricket has lost not only a former player and coach, but also a deeply valued member of its family."

Ton-up Rakshith & Paras power Swastic Union

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Swastic Union CC (1) rode on skipper Rakshith's blistering century (132; 95b) to defeat Sapphire CC by 302 runs in the KSCA YS Ramaswamy Memorial Trophy here recently.

Opting to bat, Swastic Union started on a sedate note. However, the middle order shifted the momentum with Rakshith piling 132 runs studded with 13 boundaries and six maximums. He shared a 141-run partnership in 105 balls with Sanmay Rudrawadi, who remained unbeaten on 75. Swastic Union posted a commanding 364/7.

Sapphire CC had a disappointing start, as both their opening batters were dismissed for nought. Their struggle continued throughout the innings as wickets kept falling at regular intervals. They were eventually bowled out for just 62. **Paras Gurbax Arya** starred with the ball for Swastic Union, claiming four wickets.

Brief scores: Swastic Union CC (1): 364/7 in 50.0 overs (Prakhar Chaturvedi 25, Nitish Arya 60, Rakshith S 132 (95b; 13x4; 6x6), Sanmay Rudrawadi 75 n.o; Jeevan SK 4-49) **bt Sapphire CC: 62 all out in 23.4 overs** (Paras Arya 4-13, Shashikumar Kamble 3-28).

Dooravani Cricketers (1): 232/9 in 50 overs (Keerthi M 31, Harshit Pai 40, Aarav Shriyan 33, Vineeth B 41 n.o; Vikram PS 2-44, Hardhik Chandra 2-47, Nishith Raj 2-31) **bt Visweswarapuram CC (1): 197 all out in 43.3 overs** (Sanjit Sathish 31, Vikram PS 61, Anas Sheikh 27; Keerthi M 2-31, Shivu M 3-60, Vineeth B 3-43). **Modern CC: 188 all out in 44.2 overs** (Arnav Anil 64, Ansh Aima 43; Shikhar Shetty 4-51, Abhishek Ahlawat 3-30) **lost to Vultures CC: 192/2 in 29.2 overs** (Nischal D 67 n.o, Shrijith KL 92; Gagan Sai 2-44). **The Bangalore Cricketers: 230 all out in 50 overs** (Akshay R 30, Daivik S 30, Vignesh S 39, Bhushan DS 38; Yogesh BS 2-47, SK Rathod 2-30) **lost to Engrades CC: 235/4 in 43 overs** (Prabhushankar 65, Pratham R 34, Hemanth Patil 34, Vishnu Balaji 50 n.o; Manoj Kumar 2-50).

Sir Syed Cricketers: 320/7 in 50 overs (Arnav Mishra 46, Nikin Jose 62, Mohith BA 34, Luvnith Sisodia 67, MS Bhandage 65; Abhiram V 2-48, Kiran Kumar P 2-51) **bt Bharath CC: 125 all out in 33.1 overs** (Abhiram V 30; Kushaal Wadhwani 4-32, Rajendra Danganavar 3-30). **Jawahar SC (1): 178 all out in 44.3 overs** (Premnath Gode 49; Clement Rajmohan 3-37, Neel Jain 3-12, Anirudh Deepak 3-29) **lost to Yankees CC: 179/6 in 38.1 overs** (Arsh 28, Ibrahim Rayyan 28, Clement Rajmohan 52 n.o; Nikhil Aithal 2-38, Chetan Rangraj 2-32).

Jupiter Cricketers Association: 126 all out in 36.4 overs (Dhruv Nayak 30, Nithish Gowda 35; Manvanth Kumar 4-22, Mitrakant Singh Yadav 4-26) **lost to Swastic Union CC (2): 127/5 in 23.5 overs** (Aneeshwar Gautam 46; Shreyas Girish 4-58).

Malleswaram Gymkhana: 282 all out in 47.2 overs (Rubesh Babu 53, Rahul Singhe 103 (76b; 9x4; 6x6), Niteesh Kumar 37, Karthik Rathod 35; Aries KA 2-31, Manjunath 2-53, Ajay HS 2-54, Samith 2-26) **bt National United CC: 213 all out in 43.3 overs** (Dheeraj N 27, Manjunath 70, Aries KA 53 n.o; Ajith Lakshmana 2-36, Sunny Kanchi 3-29, Karthik Govind Rathod 4-41).

Friends Union CC (2): 116 all out in 29.3 overs (Aditya Jha 26, Supreeth Kumar 30; Abhishek Prabhakar 4-28, Santosh 5-36) **lost to Social Cricketers: 117/2 in 17.3 overs** (Krishiv Bajaj 55 n.o, Aneesh K 34 n.o).

Visweswarapuram CC (2): 230 all out in 48.2 overs (Abhishek SK 63, Barath C 30, Madhava Dharwadkar 27, Nagaraja G 25 n.o; Asif Ali 2-24, Mohammad Rayan 2-59, Jayesh Babu 3-20) **bt Jolly Cricketers: 148 all out in 39.4 overs** (Yaseer Ahmed 70; Mahesh Kumar 3-20, Nagaraja G 2-16, Madhava Dharwadkar 2-2).

Bangalore Indian CC: 57 all out in 26 overs (Ashwin Tantry 28; Manu N 6-24, Vikas Gowda S 2-15) **lost to South End SC: 58/2 in 9.4 overs** (Prajwal R 31 n.o).

Wilson Garden CC: 286/8 in 50 overs (Akshay Kamath 101 (106b; 16x4; 1x6), Dhruv AS 33, Aman Mallya 28, Vashu Tyagi 31 n.o; Aditya Mani 2-58, Adarsh Prakash 2-37) **lost to Herons CC: 287/5 in 39 overs** (Prajwal Pavan 26, Sanjay Ashwin 42, Mohammed Waseef 29, Aditya Mani 93, Dheeraj Mohan 52 n.o; Aditya V 2-31, Sharana Basava 2-61).

Rajajinagar Cricketers: 143 all out in 30.2 overs (Nihal Ullal 28, Shivakumar BU 62; Banesh SP 2-14, Akshay Chenniga NS 5-58, Nihal Gowda K 2-10) **lost to Whirlwind Cricketers: 145/7 in 33.5 overs** (Tejas Reddy 47, Ashutosh Hiremath 32; Pranav Bhatia 2-51, Tejas KA 2-16).

City Gymkhana: 216 all out in 43.5 overs (Siddhanth Smaran 48, Farhan Farooq 73; Viaan Joshi 3-52, Pradeep Kumar 3-52) **lost to Friends Cricket Team: 205/7 in 34.4 overs** (Abhishek S 36, Raunak 37, Viaan Joshi 68 n.o; Pavan Shirdi 3-33, Farhan Farooq 3-42).

Bangalore Star CA: 237/9 in 50 overs (Akhil Rao 50, Chethankl 44, Anurag Bajpai 39, Kushal Pasupuleti 26 n.o, Ambresh K 4-44, Ritesh Bhatkal 2-33) **lost to Palar SC, Kolar: 238/8 in 46.5 overs** (Sudhanwa Kulkarni 40, Thippa Reddy 46, Ritesh Bhatkal 78 n.o; Inayath Pasha 3-41, Akhil Rao 4-30).

Zuccaro wins feature

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The Mumbai raider Zuccaro—from the stables of top trainer Pesi Shroff —piloted by young Vivek, came up tops in the HH Jayachamaraja Wadiyar Cup, the plum event at the races here on Sunday.

1.The Beautiful Babe Plate – 1400M: Stud Poker 1, Valor Queen 2, Shutterfly 3, Bellucci 4, 14-1/4l, 3-3/4l, 5l. T: 1:24.06. Tote: Rs 19 (W). 12, 31, 12 (P). Fc: Rs 168. Q: Rs 139. Shp: Rs 84. Thp: Rs 36. Trinalla: Rs 545 & 153. Exacta: Rs 3582 & 2302. **2.The Ministerial Plate –1100M:** Everynne 1, Garzian 2, Atman 3, Portieux 4. Not Run: Nimbus Speed. Hd, 2-1/4l, 1-1/2l. T: 1:2?8. Tote: Rs 68 (W). 20, 35, 10 (P). Fc: Rs 1099. Q: Rs 657. Shp: Rs 118. Thp: Rs 42. Trinalla: Rs 2017 & 413. Exacta: Rs 9197 & 7883. **3.The Pendragon Plate (Div-II)-1200M:** Zephyrine 1, Annabelle 2, Blind Faith 3, The Make Sure 4. Not Run: Paradoxical. 2-1/4l, Snk, 1-3/4l. T: 1:14.15. Tote: Rs 21 (W). 10, 10, 17 (P). Fc: Rs 60. Q: Rs 28. Shp: Rs 25. Thp: Rs 37. Trinalla: Rs 236 & 134. Exacta: Rs 409 & 111.

4.The Alekona Plate –1600M: Star Of India 1, Glorious Strides 2, Stalingrad 3, Shahenshaah 4. 2-1/4l, Ns, 4-1/2l. T: 1:38.82. Tote: Rs 40 (W). 13, 10, 19 (P). Fc: Rs 141. Q: Rs 28. Shp: Rs 35. Thp: Rs 34. Trinalla: Rs 277 & 227. Exacta: Rs 1315 & 1216. **5.The V.T. Velu Memorial Trophy – 1200M:** La Mcqueen 1, Fortis 2, Small Dreams 3, Eternal Glory 4. 1-1/4l, 3-1/4l, 1-1/2l. T: 1:14.16. Tote: Rs 37 (W). 13, 10, 14 (P). Fc: Rs 87. Q: Rs 31. Shp: Rs 30. Thp: Rs 34. Trinalla: Rs 111 & 52. Exacta: Rs 430 & 343. **6.The H.H.Jayachamaraja Wadiyar Cup – 1400M:** Zuccaro 1, Siege Courageous 2, Knotty Charmer 3, Galahad 4, 2-1/4l, Nk, 1-1/2l. T: 1:24.11. Tote: Rs 28 (W). 15, 11, 19 (P). Fc: Rs 48. Q: Rs 26. Shp: Rs 29. Thp: Rs 47. Trinalla: Rs 227 & 176. Exacta: Rs 1025 & 354.

7.The Commonwealth Day Plate – 1200M: Mystikos 1, Breeze Bluster 2, Ebotse 3, Southern Force 4, Not Run: Peridot. 1-3/4l, 1-1/2l, 1l. T: 1:14.32. Tote: Rs 19 (W). 10, 15, 26 (P). Fc: Rs 51. Q: Rs 40. Shp: Rs 42. Thp: Rs 46, Trinalla: Rs 217 & 132. Exacta: Rs 242 & 197. **8.The Pendragon Plate (Div I) – 1200M:** Gloriousness 1, Jade Mountain 2, Scent Of Rain 3, Mnemosyne 4. 2-1/4l, 2-1/2l, 1l. T: 1:13.49. Tote: Rs 26 (W). 14, 10, 12 (P). Fc: Rs 109. Q: Rs 38. Shp: Rs 30. Thp: Rs 41. Trinalla: Rs 84 & 36. Exacta: Rs 364 & 218.

Jackpot: Rs 8499. **Runner-up:** Rs 634.

Mini Jackpot: Rs 1154.

First Treble: Rs 786.

Second Treble: Rs 238.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

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D Gukesh, Koneru Humpy Praggnanandhaa, Divya Deshmukh lead India's charge at Norway Chess, which starts today. The team will aim to end the country's long wait for a maiden title in Oslo

Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
of Karnataka

Department of Health and Family Welfare

Shri. D. K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Dy. Chief Minister
of Karnataka

Inauguration

1st Nation's GOVERNMENT OWNED STATE-OF-THE ART Integrated Command & Control Centre

108 AROGYA KAVACHA & 104 AROGYA SAHAYA VANI | ONE CALL IN NEED, RESPONSE AT SPEED.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE INITIATIVE

GOVERNMENT-OWNED INTEGRATED EMERGENCY HEALTH NETWORK

The Government of Karnataka introduces a state-of-the-art centralized Command & Control Centre for seamless operation of emergency ambulance services including 108 Arogya Kavacha, Nagu Magu & other ambulances.

DIGITAL HOSPITAL MAPPING

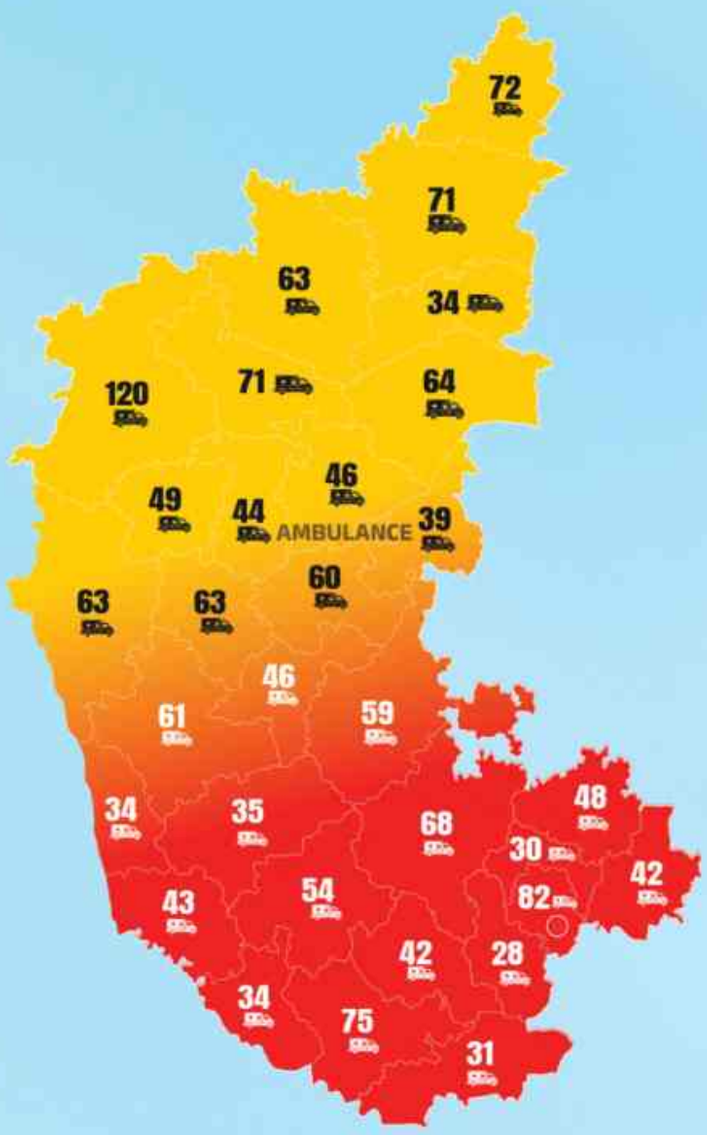
- GIS mapping of Government & Private hospitals
- Identification of nearest suitable treatment facility

ROBUST & SECURE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Hosted on secure Karnataka State Data Centre (KSDC) servers
- Reliable & uninterrupted connectivity through Karnataka State Wide Area Network (KSWAN) & dual SIP trunk lines

REAL-TIME AMBULANCE TRACKING

- Automated vehicle location & tracking enabled ambulances
- Nearest ambulance dispatch with Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) calculation
- SMS alerts with ambulance tracking details
- Patient vitals captured through digital Patient Care Record using Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) devices



*District-Wise Ambulance's across Karnataka

QUICK RESPONSE DURING EMERGENCIES

- Emergency calls answered within 5 seconds
- Automatic Location Based System (LBS) for accurate caller location detection
- Faster ambulance dispatch to save critical time

SMART MEDICAL SUPPORT

- Pre-hospital emergency care with expert medical guidance
- Real-time consultation through MDT devices
- Prior alerts to receiving hospitals for preparedness

COMMITTED TO SAVING LIVES

Providing timely emergency medical care for:

- Pregnant women
- Accident victims
- Health disaster emergencies
- Patients requiring urgent treatment

LARGE & INTEGRATED EMERGENCY FLEET

- Centralized operation of ambulances across Health & allied departments
- Integrated with 104 Health Helpline
- 112 ERSS, 181 Women & Child Helpline and more
- Emergency medical assistance enabled through the 112 India Mobile App

TECHNOLOGY ENABLED RESPONSE & IMMEDIATE ACTION IN HEALTH EMERGENCIES FOR THE CITIZENS OF KARNATAKA

Inauguration By :
Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Government of Karnataka.

Guest of Honour :
Shri D. K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Dy. Chief Minister,
Government of Karnataka.

Presided By :
Shri S. Suresh Kumar
Hon'ble MLA, Rajajinagar,
Assembly Constituency.

Date: 25 May 2026 | Time: 11:00 AM

Venue:
INTEGRATED COMMAND & CONTROL CENTER
Basaveshwara nagar, Bengaluru-560079

Chief Guest :
Shri Dinesh Gundu Rao
Hon'ble Minister for Health and Family Welfare,
Government of Karnataka.

Guest of Honour :
Shri Priya Krishna
Hon'ble MLA, Govindarajanagar,
Assembly Constituency.

FASTER RESPONSE. SMARTER CARE. SAVING LIVES 24X7.
DIAL 108 | FREE EMERGENCY SERVICE | AVAILABLE 24X7

Honourable Chief Minister
Shri Siddaramaiah
& Health Minister
Shri Dinesh Gundu Rao
participated in the
department's programme

Protecting public property and renouncing violence is a fundamental constitutional duty of every Indian citizen.

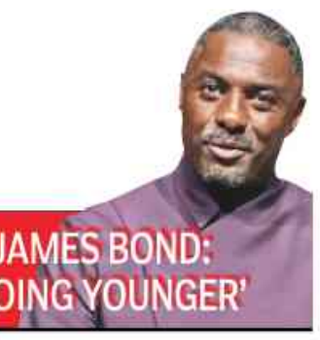
Your Health, Our Priority

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | MONDAY, MAY 25, 2026

HAPPINESS IS GOOD HEALTH AND A BAD MEMORY
— INGRID BERGMAN

TOM HARDY DROPPED FROM 'MOBLAND' AFTER ACTOR ENRAGES CO-STAR HELEN MIRREN WITH HIS 'ARROGANT ON-SITE BEHAVIOUR'



IDRIS ELBA SAYS HE WAS NEVER IN THE RUNNING FOR JAMES BOND: 'MY NAME IS NOT GETTING THROWN OUT. THEY ARE GOING YOUNGER'

Trump Gulf gamble runs aground as Iran survives American assault

Hawks Slam Emerging Deal As Tehran Maintains Leverage

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: The emerging outlines of the US-Iran deal, though not formally announced, have triggered alarm among hawkish pro-Israel Republicans in Washington who spent months insisting military pressure would either collapse the Iranian regime or force unconditional capitulation. Instead Iran appears battered but strategically intact and potentially stronger.

Republicans and Democrats alike are eviscerating President Trump for getting into a needless war at the prompting of Israel and then folding before the objectives could be achieved.

Daniel Shapiro, former US ambassador to Israel and now a leading critic of the war's execution, described the proposed agreement bluntly: "The US-Iran deal being described in the news is a weak deal, and the net result of this war is significant damage to US strategic interests," he said, arguing that once Iran demonstrated its ability to disrupt the Strait of Hormuz and attack regional infrastructure, it acquired leverage Washington had underestimated.

"Iran has gained significant leverage for the future by demonstrating it can control the Strait, by attacking its neighbours and US bases in the region and causing significant damage, and by taking the US' and Israel's best punch and surviving," he added.

That assessment has sent shockwaves through Israel and among American hawks who champion military escalation. Senator Ted Cruz, one of the administration's loudest defenders during the war, issued an extraordinary public warning. "I am deeply concerned about what we are hearing about an Iran 'deal,'" Cruz said. "If the result of all that is to be an Iranian regime — still run by Islamists who chant 'death to America' — now receiving billions of dollars, being able to enrich uranium and develop nuclear weapons, and having effective control over the Strait of Hormuz, then that outcome would be a disastrous mistake." Senator Lindsey Graham also voiced similar concerns, while Israeli officials fear Trump, under pressure from Gulf allies, may settle for de-escalation rather than complete victory.

Inside Trump's own political coalition, the emerging negotiations have exposed a widening fracture. Influential MAGA figure — deeply sceptical of wars – increasingly want Trump to declare victory and exit the conflict before it mutates into another quagmire. The political pressure intensified after reports that Trump skipped his son's wedding event to oversee negotiations many conservatives now deride as "surrender diplomacy."

Analysts say the war may have hardened rather than softened Tehran's negotiating posture. Before the conflict, Iran had shown willingness to discuss limits on enrichment and broader nuclear concessions. After weeks of war, its priorities appear transformed: security guarantees, sanctions relief, economic stabilization and formal recognition of its regional leverage.

That shift has profound implications not only for West Asia but for global geopolitics.

The Biden and Trump administrations alike spent years trying to pivot American strategic focus toward the Indo-Pacific and China. Instead, Washington now finds itself once again consumed by Gulf crises, energy shocks and the politics of regime survival in Tehran. And despite the immense military campaign waged by the US and Israel, the reality confronting Washington may be the same one Trump himself recognised years ago in that deceptively simple tweet. Iran may not win wars, but once again, it may have survived long enough to negotiate from strength.

WILL IRAN GIVE UP NUKES?

President Trump announced late Saturday that a peace deal with Iran is 'largely negotiated'. While Iran hasn't responded formally to Trump's announcement, three Iranian officials confirmed that Tehran had agreed to most of the points

Photo: Reuters

Vessels sail through the Strait of Hormuz in Musandam, Oman last week

Here are the details of the potential deal

❶ NUCLEAR COMMITMENTS

- Iran commits to never pursuing a nuclear weapon
- Iran agrees to give up its stockpile of 440.9 kg of 60% enriched uranium (which is just a short step from weapons-grade)
- Over the next 60 days, officials will finalise how to dispose of the uranium—likely diluting some and sending the rest to a third country, possibly Russia

❷ ECONOMIC AND MARITIME RELIEF

- Iran will gradually reopen the Strait of Hormuz
- In parallel, the US will end its blockade of Iranian ports
- US will issue sanctions waivers to let Iran sell oil. Full sanctions relief and unfreezing of Iranian funds will be negotiated during the 60-day window

❸ REGIONAL SECURITY

- The draft includes a formal end to the war between Israel and Hezbollah, and a pact that nations will not interfere in each other's internal affairs

Source: AP

Man opens fire near WH, shot dead

Suspect Had A History Of Mental Health Concerns, Run-In With Secret Service

Washington: A gunman opened fire near the White House on Saturday evening, with US Secret Service agents killing the assailant in a shoot-out during which a bystander was also struck, authorities said.

President Donald Trump was in the White House at the time — on a day when he was working to negotiate a deal with Iran — but was not impacted by the incident, Secret Service communications chief Anthony Guglielmi said in a statement. The confrontation took place just after 6pm (local time) when a man near the White House security perimeter "pulled a weapon from his bag and began firing." "Secret Service Police returned fire striking the suspect who was transported to an area hospital where he was pronounced deceased. During the shooting one bystander was also struck by gunfire," Guglielmi said, without giving details on the bystander's condition. No Secret Service officers were hurt.

"Thank you to our great Secret Service and Law Enforcement for the swift and professional action taken this evening against a gunman near the White House, who had a violent history and possible obsession with our Country's most cherished structure," Trump said on Truth Social early Sunday.

Multiple US media identified the suspect as Nasire Best, 21, of Maryland, reporting that Best had a history of mental health concerns. The CBS news reported that Best had been living in Washington DC, for approximately 18 months before the incident. The news report further stated that Best had a previous encounter with the United States Secret Service in July 2025, when he allegedly attempted to gain entry to the White House. He was arrested near the complex by Secret Service personnel, according to the source cited by CBS. Following that incident, Best was reportedly sent to a psychiatric ward for mental health-related issues, CBS News said.

AP Photo/Rod Lamkey

Bullet holes and shattered glass remain are seen at The People's House on Sunday at Washington

Police and security forces swarmed the scene, cordoning off access as National Guard troops blocked an AFP reporter from entering the area in downtown Washington. "We heard probably 20 to 25 what sounded like fireworks, but they're gunshots, and then everyone started running," Canadian tourist Reid Adrian told AFP.

Journalists who were on the White House North Lawn at the time said they were ordered to run and shelter in the press briefing room. ABC News correspondent Selina Wang had been recording a video for social media when the gunfire broke out, capturing the sounds of the shots as she dove to the ground. "It sounded like dozens of gunshots," she said on X. AGENCIES

'Bibi told Trump Israel will remain free to act against threats in Lebanon'

Jerusalem: Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu told US President Donald Trump Israel would remain free to act against threats in Lebanon during a phone call about an emerging agreement between Washington and Iran on Saturday, an Israeli source said.

Trump said Washington and Iran had "largely negotiated" a memorandum of understanding on a peace deal. "In last night's conversation with President Trump, the Prime Minister emphasised that Israel will maintain freedom of action against threats in all arenas, including Lebanon, and President Trump reiterated and supported this principle," the Israeli political source told Reuters on Sunday, asking not to be named.

Iran's Fars news agency said the draft stipulates that the U.S. and its allies will not attack Iran or its allies, and in return Iran pledges not to launch preemptive attacks on them.

"President Donald Trump made it clear that he will stand firm in negotiations on his consistent demand for the dismantling of the Iranian nuclear program and the removal of all enriched uranium from its territory," the source said, "and that he will not sign a final agreement without these conditions being met." REUTERS

At least 24 people killed, over 100 injured in attack on train in Pak

BLA's Majeed Brigade Claims Responsibility

Rajshekhar Jha
@timesofindia.com

Reuters

Railway staff work at the attack site in Quetta, Pakistan, on Sunday

At least two dozen Pak personnel were killed and over 100 were injured after a shuttle train was blown up in Balochistan's Quetta on Sunday morning. The train had picked up passengers from Quetta military cantonment and was on its way to connect with Jaffar Express train when it became the target of a massive Suicide Vehicle-borne (SVB-IED) attack.

The Majeed Brigade of Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the "Fidayeen attack", saying it had specifically targeted Pakistani army personnel travelling on the train. BLA released a photograph of the alleged suicide bomber, Bilal Shahwani, aka Shaaheen.

The blast, likely triggered with a large quantity of RDX, caused at least two bogies to derail and overturn and also triggered a fire, damaging civilian vehicles and houses near Chaman Phatak railway tracks. Videos uploaded on social media showed that the two bogies were completely destroyed. The shuttle was reportedly carrying over 300 Pakistani military personnel when the explosion occurred.

In a statement, Balochistan govt said that an emergency had been declared in all major govt hospitals in Quetta, with doctors, paramedical staff and other medical personnel being summoned. The district administration set up a central control room at office of deputy commissioner to ensure effective coordination of relief work.

In a statement, Shahid Rind, an aide to Balochistan chief minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on media and political affairs, said terrorists had targeted innocent civilians in the attack and that only four Frontier Corps personnel had been killed.

In a statement, BLA said: "This (Sunday) morning, the Majeed Brigade, the fidayeen (self-sacrificing) unit of the Baloch Liberation Army, targeted a train transporting personnel of the occupying forces from Quetta Cantt in a highly organised fidayeen attack. The Baloch Liberation Army accepts full responsibility for this operation.

"25-year-old fidai Bilal Shahwani, son of Chief Abdul Ghani Shahwani, was a resident of Sariab. He joined the Baloch Resistance Movement for Independence in 2020. Based on his excellent performance in the military field and discipline, Shaheed Bilal was included in the Fidai unit of Majeed Brigade in 2022 on his voluntary wish," BLA further said. Bilal Shahwani, according to BLA, was a key plotter behind all major attacks on Pak personnel in last six months and had led Operation Herof as well.

No commitment to give up uranium: Iran's media

▶Continued from P1

Trump wrote on Truth Social, according a new respect for Tehran after public grandstanding: "Both sides must take their time and get it right. There can be no mistakes! Our relationship with Iran is becoming a much more professional and productive one."

Earlier, Trump's post was more definitive on the imminent deal. "An Agreement has been largely negotiated, subject to finalisation between the US, Iran, and various other countries… Final aspects and details…are currently being discussed, and will be announced shortly," he said.

Earlier, in leaks to the American media, US officials claimed that the proposed agreement included an undertaking by Tehran to give up its uranium and unconditionally reopen the straits. But Iran's state-linked Fars News agency said there were no such commitments, insisting Tehran would continue exercising sovereign control over passage routes, timing, permits and access through the strategic waterway through which nearly one-fifth of the world's oil supplies pass.

According to reports circulating in Washington diplomatic circles, the proposed framework could involve a raft of concessions by the US, including partial sanctions relief for Iran, access to some $25 billion in frozen Iranian assets, and a phased reopening of maritime traffic in exchange for renewed but undefined discussions over Tehran's nuclear programme.

US lawmakers expressed unease over Trump's concessions, some of them characterising the deal as more generous to Iran than what President Obama purportedly granted. Unfavourable comparisons appeared to irk Trump. "One of the worst deals ever made by our Country was the Iran Nuclear Deal, signed into existence by Barack Hussein Obama and the rank amateurs of Obama Administration. It was a direct path to Iran developing a Nuclear Weapon. Not so with the transaction currently being negotiated with Iran by the Trump Administration - THE EXACT OPPOSITE, in fact!" Trump raged.

Russia uses hypersonic Oreshnik missile to attack Ukraine, 4 dead

Kyiv: Russia pounded Kyiv and surrounding areas with hundreds of drones and missiles on Sunday in one of the heaviest bombardments of the city since the start of the war, firing an Oreshnik hypersonic missile near the capital.

Russia's hours-long overnight barrage killed four people and wounded nearly 100, according to Ukrainian officials, and authorities said dozens of residential buildings and several schools had been damaged, many in the centre of Kyiv. "It's important that this does not remain without consequences for Russia," President Volodymyr Zelensky said on the Telegram messaging app, urging Ukraine's allies to act. "Decisions are needed - from the US, from Europe and others."

European leaders condemned the attack, with Britain and Germany describing the use of the Oreshnik — an intermediate range missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads — as an "escalation".

Kaja Kallas, the European Union's top diplomat, accused Moscow of resorting to "a political scare-tactic and reckless nuclear-brinkmanship". The attack caused minor damage to Ukraine's cabinet building and to the Foreign Ministry.

Kyiv's national art museum and philharmonic hall, both in the heart of the city, were badly damaged, officials said, with many other historic buildings in the city centre also affected. One of the strikes destroyed a newly opened museum commemorating the 1986 Chornobyl nuclear disaster, eliciting angry words from President Zelensky when he visited the scene. REUTERS

Reuters

A resident sits at a site of a Russian strike in Kyiv on Sunday

Ebola toll tops 200, other African countries at risk

Addis Ababa: Officials in the Democratic Republic of Congo updated the death toll from the Ebola outbreak to 204 late on Saturday, hours after the Red Cross said three volunteers had died there and Uganda confirmed three new Ebola cases. A health ministry statement said 204 deaths had been recorded in three provinces of the central African country, from 867 suspected cases. The last WHO toll on Friday put the number of deaths at 177.

On Saturday, the African Union's health agency warned that more countries on the continent were at risk of being affected by the Ebola virus. "We have 10 countries at risk," said Jean Kaseya, head of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, listing Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia. AFP

With no aid, Yemen family eats tree leaves to survive

Taez: With no food aid, 65-year-old Saeedah Mohammed heads out with a plastic bag to pick tree leaves near her displacement camp in Yemen, before serving them to her grandchildren to stave off hunger.

Behind the camp wooded hills stretch under a clear sky, while on the ground, yellowed and stony earth is strewn with rubbish. Amid the trash and destitution, daily life manages to organise itself, however imperfectly. Worn-out clothes dry on lines strung between spindly trees, and two old discarded tyres lie in the dust.

In Al-Manij camp near Taez in southwest Yemen, Mohammed lives in a makeshift tent with her two divorced daughters and their six children. Aid from the world food programme, on which her family depended, stopped more than six months ago. So now she gathers leaves and slips them into her plastic bag. Back at the tent, she puts them in a bucket and pours in water from a jerrycan. To cook the leaves, she improvises a hearth with a few branches and some stones. "I add a little salt and boil the leaves until they soften. Then I mash them and give them to the children to appease their hunger," she said.

This diet gives them recurrent diarrhoea, but she has no choice: "We go to bed hungry, we wake up without breakfast. We have nothing. No sugar, no flour, nothing."

Yemen has been ravaged by more than a decade of civil war which has displaced at least 4.5 million people and triggered a humanitarian crisis. As funding keeps decreasing, Mohammed and her two daughters beg so they can buy bread, collect leftovers from restaurants,or make do with leaves. They fled their home in 2015 after fighting broke out between Houthi rebels and govt forces in her village. Fighters confiscated their home and cattle, destroying any hope of return. AFP

DAILY PLANET

Reuters

CONSTRUCTION SITE COLLAPSES IN PHILIPPINES, 20 MISSING

Rescue workers are racing against time as they search for more than 20 people trapped in a building under construction in the Philippines that collapsed in the early hours of Sunday, local officials said. High temperatures and the lack of proper equipment are hampering the effort, with emergency workers communicating with at least two workers trapped under debris at the site in Angeles City, north of the capital Manila. A nearby hotel was damaged in the disaster killing a 65-year-old Malaysian guest, officials said

Chinese ship goes back ending brief Taiwan standoff

A Chinese coast guard ship left waters near Taiwan's strategically located Pratas Islands at the top of the South China Sea on Sunday following a tense standoff and verbal sparring between the coast guards, Taiwan's coast guard said. Taiwan's Coast Guard said on Saturday it had spotted a Chinese Coast Guard ship heading to the Pratas and immediately sent its own ship which broadcast warnings. The Chinese ship broadcast that it was on a routine mission and that China had sovereignty and jurisdiction over the Pratas, the Taiwan Coast Guard said. "Please do not destroy peace. You should return and strive for democracy. That is the correct way to serve your country," the Taiwan ship broadcast back. Taiwan's coast guard said the ship eventually began sailing away from the Pratas late in on Sunday.

Shark mauls man on Great Barrier Reef in Aus

A spearfisher was mauled on the Great Barrier Reef on Sunday in Australia's second fatal shark attack in just over a week, police said. The 39-year-old man was with three friends diving from a boat at Kennedy Shoal off the Queensland state coast south of Cairns when he was attacked, police Inspector Elaine Burns said. "The man had been spearfishing when he was attacked and died from a critical head injury," Burns told reporters. Kennedy Shoal is a shallow coral reef popular with recreational fishers. Fishers reported bull sharks had been seen in the area before the attack. A shark fatally mauled spearfisher Steve Mattabonni on May 16 at a coral reef off Rottnest Island.

'Extremely dangerous': Cycle-mad Amsterdam slams brakes on 'fatbikes'

The Hague: Fast, fashionable mode of transport for some, scourge of the cycle path for others: in bike-mad Amsterdam, complaints about "fatbikes" have driven authorities to impose an unprecedented ban in one of the city's top parks. Hugely popular with children, fatbikes — so called for their ultra-thick tyres — are electric bikes that look like squat motorcycles and can reach speeds of up to 60 kilometres per hour.

Competing for space on cycle paths in the famously flat Netherlands, many classic cyclists see fatbikes as a menace due to their superior speed and size. Complaints of "fatbike gangs" of youths tearing around Dutch cities and causing havoc are also commonplace.

A petition against "aggressive fatbikers" in Amsterdam has garnered 2,400 signatures, complaining: "Pavements are racetracks. Public space no longer feels safe." So city authorities have decided to ban them in the Vondelpark, a busy park that attracts locals and hordes of tourists on hire bikes or roller skates. "We get a huge amount of complaints," said Melanie van der Horst, the Amsterdam city official who introduced the ban. "A few years ago, we only got around 20 complaints about fatbikes. Now we have more than 2,000," she said in an interview in the park.

AFP

'Fatbikes' are e-bikes that can reach speeds of up to 60kmph, competing for space on cycle paths. Classic cyclists see 'fatbikes' as a menace

Aside from the nuisance value, there is a safety aspect, given the fatbikes' popularity among children, added the official. Fatbikes are supposed to have a maximum speed of 25kmph, but they are often illegally souped up to reach between 50kmph and 60kmph. "Imagine an 11-year-old child riding at 50kmph on a big, souped-up fatbike. It's extremely dangerous," said van der Horst. Children have been rushed to hospital with injuries after fatbike accidents, she said.

Visitors to the Vondelpark generally welcomed the ban, with a healthy dollop of the liberal scepticism. "I don't think you should ban anything but I do believe that they should have started maybe by banning kids under a certain age... because I think that's the biggest issue," said Aleksandar Rankovic, a football coach.

Tanja Meuris also welcomed the ban, but admitted she didn't see the difference between a fatbike and a classic electric bike. "I have an electric bike and I think that this thing goes very fast and it can be dangerous if not handled well," said Meuris, 27, a psychologist.

From next week, anyone caught riding a fatbike in the Vondelpark will be fined. People over 16 will have to pay a fine of €115. Children between 12 and 15 pay half that. Kids under 12 won't be fined, but their parents will be informed. AFP